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DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

BY

ISAAC LEESER.

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הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט'.

"Behold! thus is my word, saith the Lord, like the fire,
and like the hammer that shivereth the rock."
Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

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DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL.

O THOU ONLY ONE, to whom peculiarly appertains the essence of eternity, who wast, who art, and who wilt be! come, and let thy holiness dwell in our midst, among the children of Israel, who sanctify Thee only, and rejoice in thy praise. O, how infinite art Thou! Thou wast from the beginning; and the revolutions of ages, the mutations of all created things, have found no change in Thee. And thy Word, too, has stood fast, and been upheld above all that is on earth; and it has subdued empires, and is still going on conquering the wayward will of man, humbling the stubborn sinners before thy might. And the same, as Thou once didst reveal thyself to the father of the prophets, we find Thee to be by our daily experience. Thou saidst, "I WILL BE hath sent me to you;" and even now there is no abatement of thy

power, and thy vigour is undiminished, as also is thy bounty unabated, and the same goodness is now extended over thy children as that which they experienced in the commencement of their call to thy service. O Father! let this truth be deeply impressed on our minds; fill us so entirely with thy spirit, that we may discover thy exalted wisdom in all thy ways, that prosperity may not elevate us above the duties we owe unto Thee, and that tribulations may draw us closer to the sheltering Rock, even thyself, O God of truth! to seek protection from Thee alone, who hast power to save, and to ask for comfort from Thee, the only One, who art the Lord of consolations, the Shield of Abraham, who wilt send the redeemer to thy people, to rescue them from the yoke of their enemies, even as Thou didst send Moses in ancient days to free them from the labour of Pharaoh. Amen.

Brethren!

Let us once more revert to a contemplation of the peculiarities of our faith, which distinguish it from the other systems which mankind have adopted at various times, as their means of seeking happiness. When we start in life, say without any instruction even, we must nevertheless soon discover that we are, individually, not more potent than are other beings whom we meet with; but that we are weak, subject to diseases, destined for death, just as others are; for we came into the world powerless like other infants, and only grew to our present stature and mental development by imperceptible degrees, like other men. In health, we may perhaps deem ourselves invulnerable; prosperity may influence us with

the idea of a species of independence, a vague notion of our self-sufficiency; but let sickness assail us, let our success be overthrown by adversity, and we at once acknowledge that our strength is derived, not inherent in our nature; that our prosperity was granted, not depending on our own will; and, consequently, that of our own selves we cannot lay claim to any of the gifts we enjoy, nay, not to the very breath which is in our nostrils. Hence we are led to the reflection that, as we are like all other men on earth, that, as they are not superior to us any more than we are superior to them, no one who bears the same outward appearance with us—that is to say, neither ourselves nor any other human beings—can be the authors of our happiness, and that, in consequence, we are necessarily dependent upon a higher Power for whatever we enjoy. So, then, the first inquiry which any thinking mind is led to make will bring him to the acknowledgment of a Being who is his superior; and as this Being needs must be powerful, because of the display of his superiority, man in his helplessness is induced to ask Him for aid on any occasion where he finds that his own strength does not suffice to obtain what he needs, —or, in other words, the worship of a superior Power is natural to man. But this does not say that his ideas must necessarily be based upon what we call a correct standard, or that he will assimilate with us in the acknowledgment of a uniform, all-pervading Being, who created, sustains, and governs all from the beginning of things unto the present moment; for this is a depth of discovery at which man can scarcely arrive by his own reflection. On the con-

trary, he casts his eye above him, and he beholds the brilliant sun, the dispenser of light and heat, seated, as it were, upon the highest throne of visible beings: and he fancies that in this beneficent star there is placed the power to bless and to vivify all labours, as without the presence of his heat in due season the harvest is blasted, the vintage is withered, and the olives rot on their branches; and, not heeding that the sun also is a creature, he erects to him temples and altars, and represents him as a man in the prime of life, possessed of vigour and high intellect, and calls on him on the day of trouble, and says unto him, "Save me, for thou art my father!"—Or he sees, when the light of day has vanished, and he wanders forth in the gloom of night on the dark and cheerless road where lies his way, the splendid orb of the moon elevating itself slowly and majestically above the distant hills, and he is cheered by the mild effulgence which is scattered around over mountain and valley; and he rejoices that he is thus blessed, and he thanks in his heart the dispenser of his joy. But he again thinks not of the Creator who hung the lesser luminary in the wide expanse, to give light on earth during the hours of night; and he fancies that the star herself has power; and to her also he consecrates groves and temples, and appoints priests to interpret the will of the goddess whom he deems endowed with strength, and vows to her sacrifices, to propitiate for himself the favour of the guardian of his sleeping hours.—And in like manner will it probably be for every exhibition of power which he may discover in nature: each individual exhibiting it is to him a source of joy and of terror.—Time, in his irresistible progress, de-

notes to him an all-consuming deity; the ocean is imbued with uncontrollable strength over all who launch their bark on his waves; the fire, which is so powerful in subjecting Nature to the service of man, is to him an object of reverence and of fear; its beneficence, as well as its devastations, must be propitiated; and for its dwelling the centre of the earth is considered the fitting place, and the craters of burning mountains are viewed as entrances to its dominion; the earth herself, as the sustainer of life, and unchanging as she is in her aspect and the regularity with which she performs all her functions, is also viewed as the progenitor of all the other powers which are derived from her, according to their nature. The various passions which agitate the human soul, be they love, hatred, mercy, justice, envy, or any other, are likewise exhibitions which claim a regard from the untutored son of earth, who beholds in them powers uncontrollable by him, to which, however, he himself is subject during his sojourn in the world. So, the calamities of war and death, the blessings of peace, plenty, and life, become personified as beings to be adored, and as exercising an influence over the affairs of man. In short, all the phases of outward Nature become instinct with a controlling direction over the beings whose lot is cast on the earth; and if man once leaves out of sight that all we see owes its origin to *one Cause*, every *subordinate force* becomes naturally a something which can injure or benefit the powerless mortal; powerless, I say, because, from the day of his birth to that of his dissolution, time, and fear, and heat, and cold, disease and joy, pleasure and pain, all in one confused array, are tending to abridge

his days, and will at length be followed by death, to finish his existence, should he have even successfully resisted all the ills which flesh is heir to, to an age which exceeds that of all other men. But, even then, even to the child of nature, there is a something beyond, a controlling influence, which guides what is immortal in us; and imaginative man, therefore, has invested the kingdom of the shades with its judges and its terrors, its Elysium and its Tartarus, not, perhaps, in accordance with the sober light of reason, but because there is a law impressed on the essence of our soul, which teaches us, "I shall not totally die." The idea of annihilation, an entire extinction of the vital spark, is abhorrent to the perfect work which we find developed in our moral and physical organization; hence, if we fancy that on earth we have our demons and our gods, our good and evil geniuses, it necessarily follows that the severed soul also is subject to the consequences which either the justice or caprice of the gods may decree to her, just as they found cause to be pleased or displeased with the conduct of the composite of flesh and spirit who erst dwelt in the upper regions, otherwise called "the living man;" and hence also arose the same division in the control over the spirit which formerly was accorded to the body when living, or the theory of the gods of the nether world.

But it is not necessary that we should go through the whole series of the divinities of refined polytheism which is found in the poetry of the Greeks and Romans; as those who have any pleasure in the inquiry can examine the various and easily-accessible authorities for themselves. Only one thing appears to us so

singularly defective in the whole, that a system so strangely artificial, where one god is the husband of a particular goddess, and where the product of such a union is a succession of a new race of immortals, did not disgust the followers thereof. There is no purity in the gross representations which were given in the writings of the ancients; and whatever, therefore, of sublime thought was originally connected with such ideas of worship, was gradually lost in the absurd fables of mythology, as developed in the books which treat of the pagan divinities. Still, so it is; for as soon as one departs from the simplicity of the original ideas of the Deity which, no doubt, were revealed to our first parents in Eden, and invests Nature or any of its component parts with independent powers, or imagines the same as coexistent with the Creator: he at once opens the flood-gates of error and folly, and one absurdity after the other will gain admittance into a system of belief so constituted; and if even he or his generation may not at once sink in the entire abyss of unreason, his followers or successors will, to a surety, reach that state of imbecility, if they persevere to pursue the vanities of their precursors. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that, in the midst of heathen follies, there were a few who, endowed with superior faculties, could not find satisfaction in the multiplicity of gods they were called on to worship. They conceived that there must be a great Architect, a UNITY, to whose immediate power all owes its existence. There were such, as history shows us; but how laborious must have been their search, how painful their reflections, before they could at all arrive at the to us evident conclusion.

It was with them the struggle of human reason against the errors inherited from their fathers; and only by slow and gradual approaches could they reach that point of perfection where the Creator, with his attributes of infinite mercy and irresistible power, stood revealed to their eyes. But we cannot well determine if ever a heathen obtained a true knowledge of his relation to God by his own reflection, or whether he did not always, under the most favourable circumstances, retain some attachment to the works of human hands and the inventions of the human mind which were adored around him. We may go farther, and maintain that originally the truth of the divine existence was made manifest to the world by a direct revelation of his being by the Creator himself; and that it was only a long course of wilful rebellion against the Godhead which at length allowed the baneful errors of Paganism to acquire the whole dominion over the human heart. But it is impossible to believe that no glimmer of pure light occasionally passed over the face of the gloom which shrouded the human intellect, and that whenever a glimpse of the truth reached a mind of great endowment, whom the Lord occasionally raised up to arouse a sleeping world, the acquiescence in the dogmas of his countrymen became, perhaps, more a matter of policy than of conviction. A fear of offending might probably have prevented him from an entire separation from the errors which were upheld every where; and whatever is alleged of the toleration of heathenism, it is equally certain that, if even it admitted any addition to its gods and demons, it looked upon and punished as atheism a di-

rect denial of the beings which it had established as divinities. I leave it to historians to enter into the minutiæ of the subject; my present aim is the single point of the dissent which our religion presents to the views under discussion.

Another fact why we find, in comparatively later times, Grecians and Romans speaking more in consonance with reason, has perhaps been overlooked by many who have given the subject a mere careless reflection. It is this: The wars of David, in the first instance, carried with his armies a knowledge of the faith and practice of Israel into the countries bordering on the Euphrates. The fame of Solomon, and the commerce which he opened with the distant Ophir and Tarshish (probably India and Spain) must have also tended to leave some seeds of Judaism in the minds of those who either visited the court of this wise prince, or who had intercourse with his servants in foreign lands. During the remaining time of the first temple, more or less commerce was kept up with the coasts of the Mediterranean, and the countries to the east of Palestine; and when at length the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were subverted,—especially the latter, where the religion of the Bible had always been more observed than in Samaria,—the followers of the Lord were scattered far and wide, from Media to Egypt; and in the latter country Jeremiah the prophet, with Baruch, his scholar, became the guide of the fugitives who sought there refuge from the anger of the Babylonian king. Now, whoever reflects how much of its wisdom Greece borrowed or obtained from Egypt will not be easily led to suppose that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, not

to mention their successors, were not in some manner indoctrinated with the Bible dogmas, which had obtained so strong a foothold on the shores of the Nile five hundred years before the commencement of the vulgar era. It need not surprise any one that our doctrines are not cited by name by the heathens; for this would have made them appear as copyists; whereas they desired to figure as inventors, as founders of new systems of philosophy. It will, therefore, not be assuming too much to assert that the Bible tended greatly, if not alone, to infuse a purer idea of the Creator and his attributes into the religious views of Western pagans; and that but for this they would have continued as debased as they were in the beginning.

Perhaps,—to resume the thread of our argument,—those who came the nearest to the simplicity of truth in their conceptions of the Deity were the Persians, who viewed him as a twofold being, one *the principle of evil*, and the other, that *of good*. They had thus a narrower range for error, although this did not bring them upon the truth that there is but one Author, from whom both what we call evil and good are derived, and that the very evil which to us appears as that which we ought to guard against, such as bodily pain and death, is at the bottom a necessary ingredient in the government of the universe, and will in its consequences conduce to the permanent benefit of the creation. The Persians endeavoured to account for the presence of evil by supposing that it was the emanation of an independent spirit, and not derived from the Good Principle, who is a pure, eternal light, the original source of all perfection;

and they averred that man himself becomes the servant of the one or the other, as he may choose vice or virtue, folly or wisdom. We have here again a division of power, no homogeneous working of all for one purpose. Man can reject for himself after this theory his allegiance to the good Creator, and become a willing servant and an adherent of the evil and the author thereof.

It is not to be supposed that, however pure the refined systems of idolatry were, they did not descend gradually into the grossest misconceptions of truth, and lead to immorality and misgovernment; for, even admit that the priests and philosophers, as I have remarked on a former occasion, may have known better, and believed, accordingly, in a more refined view of the origin of things, they were naturally too much interested in the support of the artificial system which gave them such power over the multitude of their countrymen, to impart to these any doubts, except under a strict injunction of mystery, of the popular views of religion and morality. Hence gross ignorance was the lot of the people; and those who *handled* the state religion were the actual leaders in peace and in war of the affairs of the commonwealth, and there was but one step from the augur and pontifex to that of consul. This was the case with all Paganism, more or less, as investigation will prove; and this will again be, should ever the light expire (of which, thanks be to our Maker, there is no danger) which was enkindled by his own inspiration.

How far Moses, when he led the flock of his father-in-law far into the desert, to the Mount of God, to Horeb, was instructed in the faith of Abraham, we

have no means of ascertaining. The Israelites, in general, had evidently become deeply contaminated with the grossness of superstition around them; and whether or not the elders and leaders of the people had escaped the corruption,—whether they firmly adhered to the idea of a unity in the Godhead, or not,—must ever remain a matter of doubt. Be this, however, as it may, it is certain that the man Moses was one in whom had been implanted a true spirit of wisdom, a discerning soul to learn with readiness and to appreciate any moral proposition presented to him. What his frame of mind was in respect to the sufferings of the Israelites is evident from the danger he incurred by slaying the Egyptian who smote a Hebrew man, one of his brethren,—not an actual brother from parentage, but a brother in descent from Abraham the Hebrew,—a slave to Pharaoh, whilst he was the favourite of the king's daughter, raised in luxury in the royal palace as the son of the princess. He fled from the threatened vengeance of the tyrant's sword; and the pampered courtier became at first a fugitive, and at length the keeper of the flock of the priest of Midian. How his mind must have boiled over with indignation, as rumour wafted to his ears new accounts of the sorrows of Israel! how his soul must have longed for an irrepressible power to break the fetters of his suffering brothers! But, alas! he grew aged; the termination of his life (for he was eighty years old) presented itself; and still the sons of Jacob sighed under bondage, though a new king had arisen in the place of the one grown old in tyranny, who had made their burdens heavy, and their life bitter. But, when human aid and human intel-

lect had no means of saving, the Divine aid was ready to interpose, to effect the purpose of the call of Abraham, and to redeem the promises made to the patriarchs, — promises which had almost ceased to excite a vibration of hope in the hearts of Pharaoh's bondmen. It was, therefore, that the man of high aspirations, though in the humble guise of a shepherd, was especially chosen to become the mighty instrument of the twofold purpose, to break asunder the chains of slavery, and to establish anew the knowledge of the God of our fathers. Our lesson of to-day describes, in simple and awful words, how Moses was awakened unto the high consciousness of his prophetic errand, and how he beheld the vision of the Supreme revealed to his outward eyes, and how he acquired new wisdom from hearing the immediate voice of the Author of the world. No comments can add aught to the force of the words, which say, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and their cry have I heard on account of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I have come down to deliver them from the hand of Egypt, and to bring them up from this land into a land good and ample, into a land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Emorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite." Here at once was a promised consummation to all that Moses had ever hoped for, a view of the highest knowledge, and an assurance of the safety of his own people. Nay, more, when he offered his own unworthiness as a reason why he should not go to Pharaoh to accom-

plish the work of redemption, he was assured that he should be specially aided by the One who then spoke to him, and be the means of bringing the people to worship God at the very place where he then was. Now, mark the query of Moses: "Behold, when I come to the sons of Israel, and I say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" The people were probably in the habit of calling on the gods of their masters; they had learned to reverence a multitude of beings, all objects of adoration, though all differing in power. They therefore would naturally ask, "Who of all these is the God of our fathers? or is there a different name, another God, of whom we as yet know not who he is?" It was so much in accordance with Egyptian ideas, that this strange question of Moses loses its singularity, when we view it by the light which this consideration will throw upon it. The Almighty, therefore, showed no evidence of displeasure, as He did afterwards at Moses's perseverance in refusing his mission; but the answer was simple, and beyond measure comprehensive and grand:

אהיה אשר אהיה ויאמר כה תאמר לבני ישראל
אהיה שלחני אליכם : שמו ג' יד':

"I-will-be He that I-will-be; and He said, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, I-will-be hath sent me unto you." Exodus iii. 14.

First, He instructed Moses that his name is only the express exponent of his being; as He is in power unlimited, in essence infinite, in wisdom unsearchable,

no appellation which human language can invent could possibly suffice to embrace all He is in one word. No name, therefore, can be applied to Him, except the phrase "I will be,"—conveying an infinite duration, an existence without limit. If then the children of Israel should wish to know by what name they are to call the God of their fathers, they should be told that it is the same of whom it could be said, in the beginning of all creation, "I will be," and who, when all shall again, if that be his will, sink into chaos or nothing, will still exist in the same power, and yet say, "I will be." And this, brethren, was the subject-matter of the great revelation of which Moses was the constituted messenger, of which the Israelites were appointed the bearers to all times, from that day and forward. Great as was the day of the assembly at Horeb, it was but the more complete exponent of the first Divine appearance in the unconsumed bush on the same sacred spot. The first message of Moses to the Israelites revealed at once what only was attained by unassisted human reason, if ever it attained thereto, by the most intense reflection, and by traditions of the discovery of the predecessors who had accumulated thoughts and reflections, which were rendered more perfect by the labours of those who followed them. But, by the announcement before us, how was the conceit of priests and mystifiers brushed away at once and forever! "I will be," one alone and all-powerful, was *the Lord God* from the beginning. The sun, the moon, the ocean, the earth, the passions, the virtues, death, nature, the evident good, the apparent evil, are all his emanations. He willed it, and they were; He again speaks,

and they vanish. He is the Governor of all; He sees whatever is done in the highest and most secret places; and He too will judge the living and the dead, because He is the God of spirits of all flesh, and all must return to Him at his bidding. We do not claim any merit for the discovery of our religion; we ask not for Moses the highest niche in the temple of fame as the greatest reformer: we only aver that we were instructed again at Horeb, by the Deity, in the truths which He had revealed from the beginning, and which sinning men had obscured by their inventions, by their substituting as objects of worship the creature instead of the Creator. We too were either sunk in or fast hastening to the slough in which the heathens had been immersed; and it was the mercy of our Father only which rescued us thence, to become the witnesses of his great and holy Name. Now, what was revealed to Moses? A simple, single truth. What did it concern? The nature of the Deity. What was its import? That the God of Israel is the ONE who will be. There is no plurality indicated, no mediator alluded to; but it says, emphatically, "I WILL BE hath sent me unto you;"—the same who created the world,—the same who selected Abraham as his servant for his well-tested piety,—the same who promised to be with Isaac in his pilgrimage,—the same who told Jacob that He would go down with him to Egypt and bring him up from there,—in short, the ONE, who was God from ever, had heard the cry of anguish of the sons of Israel, and now showed his glory to Moses, to send him with a message of happy tidings, to fulfil the promise of establishing a nation of worshippers to spring from Abraham, at the Mount

of Horeb. This, then, was accomplished; and we are yet left to continue the truth in ourselves and our descendants. May we be true to our trust, and merit speedily the coming of the Son of David to redeem the world.

Tebeth 20th. } 5607.
Jan'y 8th. }

DISCOURSE II.

TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL* PUNISHMENTS.

O GRACIOUS FATHER, who chosest us from all nations to be thy own heritage! listen we pray Thee to our supplication, and grant unto us the desires of our hearts which are for good, and satisfy our souls with the blissful assurance of thy favour, which is the portion of those who fear thy Name. Ages, O our God! have passed away, since Thou didst call us unto thy presence, to witness thy glory, and to see thy consuming fires; and the recollection thereof still abides with us, and we rejoice to be called thy servants. Do Thou then bless us with the evidences of thy bounty, and lead us gently unto the shadow of thy fold, and appoint over us faithful shepherds who will guide thy flocks rightly, and give us righteous teachers who will instruct us in all that appertains to thy law. So shall we be safe amidst the gentiles, and all will acknowledge, that we are thy divinely-chosen people,

* That means, punishment after death, not unceasing.

though our sins have banished us from thy land; and we shall thus also be ever ready to bear the testimony to thy unwavering truth, for which sake Abraham was called, and the sons of Jacob were appointed thy messengers, until the day when all creatures shall adore Thee alone, and worship only Thee as their God and King. Amen.

Brethren!

In the chapter next following the one containing the Ten Commandments we find not a theoretical exposition of the principles laid down in our blissful constitution, not a laboured defence of the ideas therein contained as the basis of our religion; but a practical statement of laws calculated to subserve the civil government of the people of Israel; and thus speaks the text:

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם : שמות כא' א':

"And these are the laws of justice which thou shalt lay before them." Exod. xxi. 1.

Perhaps not a single circumstance other than this exordium of a state government so immediately following upon the revelation of the Decalogue, could give us so clear an insight into the nature of the divine legislation, as the one before us. If we look into the Ten Precepts which were given to the people as the direct emanation of their God's teaching, we will find in them nothing but naked enactments of simple duties, without any attempt to prove their correctness or necessity. And in tracing out the ramifications which were engrafted upon them afterwards,

and communicated to the messenger whom the people had chosen to announce to them the divine will, we can discover nothing of a different nature in their tenor or their wording; they are precisely as the constitution on which they are founded, and must fall or stand by their inherent weakness or strength, as the text itself gives us no arguments whatever in their favour, farther than that they are the expressed will of God, and their observance will redound to our happiness. Nay, more, we find, properly speaking, no affirmations of any truths, only legislative enactments in their proper sense; and whatever of the former are conveyed to us, they are brought before us incidentally, or as connected more or less with the outward observances which are demanded of us in our code. We must hence draw the conclusion, that we would look upon the Mosaic law from a wrong point of view, were we to deny the existence of any doctrine or truth simply because it is not mentioned there in express terms, and do this to that degree as to entertain any position as correct which is diametrically opposed to either of the commandments or assertions which are to be found therein. It is evident that though the first verse of the Decalogue is a mere declaration, it has still all the force of a most imperative injunction, announcing to the people that the Being, who was then addressing them, was the imperishable Eternal One, who had alone redeemed them from bondage, and hence that they were bound to confide in Him solely, and to be ready to execute whatever He might ask of them in response to his being their God. In other words, the declaration merely recites the fact and truth which they had known and became

convinced of before; they had experienced themselves the benefits resulting from their deliverance, and had been impressed by the force of the strongest possible evidence which miracles could afford, that their God was in truth an existing Power, and that moreover He must of necessity be the greatest of all existing beings, He having subverted the ordinary course of events to bring them to Him. No secondary truth was requisite to impose upon them the conviction that they ought to submit to be taught by Him who is the highest; for common sense would certainly be enough to exact such a consent from them and all other men; for since they were creatures, as all other mortals are at the present hour, and as their wisdom was in consequence subordinate to that of the Creator, it would only be obeying the emanation of a sure Intelligence to follow implicitly all the ordinances and statutes which He might dictate. It need not therefore surprise you that no other doctrine or matter of belief is laid down in the Decalogue as the foundation of the Jewish religion, and no laboured definition is given of what the Deity is. He exists; this we feel in the innermost secret dwelling of our soul; this our fathers felt with the most perfect conviction, at the moment they were assembled at Sinai; and consequently no other inducement is required to believe in Him, nor is it requisite to base legislation upon any other assumption than that the Legislator had the right and the power to cause his will to be obeyed. Hence it would be the reverse of sound reasoning to say, that, because the Decalogue recites not in so many words the eternity of God, He is, therefore, not eternal; or that because

it is silent with regard to the permanence of the law, the law is destined to undergo the fate of all things on earth, and fall at length into oblivion. On the contrary, we must examine the other portions of the book written by the inspiration of God, and learn from them what we are to think and believe with respect to the things which concern our happiness. As far as the necessity for obedience is to be taken in account, it is enough for us to be convinced of the existence of God; but if we wish to understand our relation to Him, we must go farther, and see how He has revealed himself to us in all the manifestations which we have obtained through his merciful instruction. There is therefore no necessity to look in the Pentateuch, the books of Moses, for a confirmation of all the articles of our belief; if we find confirmation therein, it is certainly well; but the reverse need not alarm us; for it is enough if our hopes and views are established by the messages of the later prophets, who were sent by the Lord to complete the system which was commenced in Moses.

Nor is it to be said that, because the law may be silent with respect to certain truths, such as the immortality of the soul, and the reward and punishment after death,—they were unknown to the Israelites of the times of Moses, or that he did not impart them to the people in his familiar instruction; only this can be asserted with regard to such omissions, that they did not come naturally within the range of the subjects which he was commanded to lay before them; and consequently it was not comportable with the nature of his system, that he should, without cause or necessity, but merely to lay down simple doctrines,

recite a number of truths which it behoved us to know and to believe in. The existence of the Deity alone it was necessary to teach as an article of primary acknowledgment; because without it there could be no legislation; but as respects the future state, its joys and its sorrows, it could not be made an object of legislation, because it naturally cannot apply to man in his mixed state of existence, and to such alone was the law given—to a being who has his existence on the earth, and who cannot, do what he will, lift himself above the things of the earth, during any portion of his sojourn here below. Besides the views resulting from immortality can only relate to man in his individual capacity; they cannot reach him in his position as a member of society, nor can society at large be governed by views which have not earth as their native place. Whatever felicity the spirit of the righteous will attain in its purified existence, cannot enter into the calculations of justice and duty, so far as this depends upon the action of judges and executive magistrates; they cannot allow the virtuous to be abridged of his personal rights, because he is sure of a large reward in heaven; nor can they conscientiously hide their eye from the malefactor, from the consideration which the Scriptures hold out, "that God will not let the guilty pass unpunished." We have nothing to do with abstractions in our social relations; here we must deal with matter, and material things; consequently a truly wise legislation confines itself solely to those points which it can handle and carry into execution.

Do not misunderstand me, brethren, as saying that the law of Moses contains no allusions to a purer state

of existence than our present; or that every doctrine which we confide in is not directly traceable from some text therein which only by violent wresting could bear another interpretation: I only argue against those who deny many of our views altogether or claim for them an origin of a later period, and from an authority which we cannot admit. Against all such objections I would maintain that, if even we grant all they claim from the view that the law itself is silent respecting our doctrines, we are nevertheless justly empowered to claim for them full credence and hope, so long as we can deduce them from those books of Scripture which were written down sooner or later after the death of Moses; and that though not the slightest allusion to any other doctrine than the simple existence of God were contained in the law, all the articles of our belief, being, as they are, supported by the evident sense of texts from other portions of Holy Writ, would be true, and demand our strictest belief and acquiescence. There can be no difference between one portion of Scripture and the other as regards sanctity; and hence the whole becomes a foundation of doctrine and belief, without our being authorized to choose between one and the other section.

But as respects the absolute intentions of the law itself, it was instituted to teach us statutes and ordinances which we should observe in our national existence, and as individuals belonging to the people of Israel. It was intended that the Decalogue should be the constitutional basis, and the other precepts the code for a commonwealth of equals and freemen, of whom the head and sovereign is the Lord himself. He was to be, unseen to the eye, dwelling within

the residence which his mercy permitted the people to erect in the midst of them to his holy Name; and they were to be nationally prosperous or suffering as their conduct towards their Sovereign might merit. The people bore to the Lord the relation of subjects to their king, and in the measure as they deserved his bounty, should they obtain it. Now it is not necessary to argue that future rewards or punishments could not affect the Israelites as a nation, nor could such a procedure be an evident manifestation of divine favour or displeasure. Suppose that a whole generation should have been condemned to perpetual punishment hereafter: this could not have any visible effect on earth, and must hence fail of affecting the succeeding generations, whilst at the same time it would have been utterly inoperative to act as a corrective to the doomed themselves; whereas it comports best with the justice of the Lord that all punishment should be dispensed to redeem the erring child of the dust from his evil ways. Now observe the wisdom of God as displayed in his law. Immediately after announcing himself at Sinai, and convincing the people that none but the Supreme had taught them himself in his fire and his glory, He proceeded to organize his kingdom on earth through the establishment of laws of justice and practice, which are to be accompanied with rewards and punishments tangible alike to the capacities of the whole people and individuals, and affecting them in their national and individual prosperity.—God announced himself as the Preserver of justice and equal rights; hence the judges, who were to do on earth what He exercises in the universe, should not regard whether the matter

brought before them was little or great, whether the parties were the poor or the wealthy; but they should hold an even balance, keep themselves free from partiality, by not accepting gifts or favours from those whom they had to judge, and to speak out freely their judgment which they had arrived at after their best and mature reflection, without regard whether they agreed with their colleagues in opinion or whether theirs was overbalanced by the authoritative decision of the many.—Respecting personal rights there could be no prerogative, no exemption, no privilege which all did not enjoy alike; they were all brothers, all of the same importance in the presence of their King; and the beggar of to-day might become the leader of the morrow.—Consequently the rewards and punishments were such as the people themselves could exercise; the body and property of each citizen became surety for his faithful adherence to the national constitution, and both could become forfeited, whenever the unbiassed judgment of honest men, supported by undoubted testimony, had proved that the accused had been guilty of such a violation of the laws, as demanded that visitation which the code, under which all lived, of right attached to the transgression.

This much as regards a state of things, when but few required correction, when the many were true to their allegiance. But the Sovereign did not resign his power of coercing obedience, because He had appointed judges on earth; on the contrary He reserved to himself the great exercise of his kingly power to do his pleasure or withhold his blessing according to the merits of the entire nation. National prosperity, plentiful crops, a state of profound peace, victory

when unjustly attacked by foreign invaders, length of days on earth, robust health, in short all the outward tokens of a happy community, were to be the reward of obedience, and an incentive to persevere in the path of righteousness. But they were certified that if the reverse should take place, if there were war, or famine, or mortality, or the absence of the refreshing rain of heaven,—in each and all of these occurrences they might be sure that sin was abounding in their land, and that it was time to repent of the evil, and to strive to propitiate the indignation of their King by a sincere seeking of righteousness, that is, by a renewed and firm observance of the precepts of the law which they had received for their guidance.

The result of all this was that, as we see in all periods of our national history, the people were constantly aroused, whenever they fell into transgression, to a knowledge of the wrong they had done. During the time of Moses we find recorded several cases of plague, which struck down many of the people; and they at once felt that they had merited this visitation, because they had rebelled against God. When Joshua led the Israelites to the conquest of the Holy Land, Achan sinned and took of the condemned spoil of Jericho, and at once Israel fled from before their enemies; the reverses which they had met with caused them to seek where the guilt was; and with the punishment of the culprit victory again crowned the arms of the Hebrew warriors. In later times, when the people threw off the yoke of the Lord of hosts and worshipped the idols of their neighbours, these overcame the now forsaken flock, and "when Israel sowed came up the bands of Eastern marauders,

and despoiled both fields and vineyards." The sin was thus rendered manifest, and by a repentance, thus forced upon them by the combination of circumstances clearly betokening the wrath of Heaven, the calamity was averted and peace again revisited the land. Thus it was for many years, periods of outward prosperity succeeded those of national calamity; until at length the great corruption which had lasted for several generations, and after repeated warnings had been unheeded by the children of rebellion, caused their final expulsion from Palestine, and this clearly proved that their conduct had become so odious in the sight of God, that He had needs to expel them for a time from his presence, to teach them the difference between the easy yoke of their Master, and the burdens of those whose alliance and customs they had preferred in their wicked choice.

It will be readily understood, that all the chastisements were not calculated to effect the eternal condemnation of the people or the individuals thereof; but that they were in the spirit of the corrections of which Solomon speaks when he says: "For him whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and as a father who wisheth to correct his son." A few, it must be admitted, perished in their iniquity; but their removal operated always as an example to others, and so they died not in vain; and as with the death of the body our existence is not ended, who knows but that the very ones who were taken, may thereby have made an expiation for their sins, and become purified, and been tried, and rendered white before the Lord? It were unjust almost to impute any other course to the Judge of all flesh, whose mercy so im-

measurably exceeds his indignation, and to whom the minutest insect is an object of providential care.

We may, therefore, assume as a fact clearly established, that the omission of announcing in the Pentateuch spiritual punishments and blessings, which affect us after death, is no evidence that the Israelites were unacquainted with this scheme from the commencement of revelation; since Moses's legislation was for a practical end, for a government existing on earth, and therefore to be exercised by such means as are evidently within the reach of human beings, comprehended by the ordinary understanding of man. But in the various expressions that God would dwell in the midst of us, and come and bless us with his presence; his calling himself constantly the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who already long since slept in their sepulchres; his saying emphatically that He was the one who slayeth and maketh alive, and many other expressions which we could easily enumerate, establish to the satisfaction of the sincere believer, that there never was a time when the Israelites were uninstructed of their responsibility in the spirit, when severed from the body, for the deeds in their mixed state of existence. But as the punishment in the flesh is intended for our purification, so are we also authorized to hope at least, that the punishment after death will not be for eternity, except perhaps in rare cases, where one man is the cause of the sinning of many others; but as very few can thus sin for a permanent time, so few only can be punished for more than a season; and when their visitation has been endured, their spirit will be restored to that state of felicity, or life, for which we all are created, as our wise men

teach: כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא "All Israel have a share in the life to come."—Thus believing, we can best justify the mercy of God, whose care is extended over all his creatures, who is good to the righteous and the sinner, which is his greatest praise, and whose days are eternity, whilst our existence and our deeds are confined within the narrowest compass. Let us, then, be animated with a deep reverence for the Justice which governs the world; let us respect inly the law of our King; that we may be adjudged worthy in his eyes, and that He in his renewed favour may restore for our nation the crown to the head of the son of Jessé, and secure for ourselves the delights of everlasting which spring from the presence of our God. Amen.

Shebat 26th. } 5607.
Feb'y 12th. }

DISCOURSE III.

SACRIFICES AND ATONEMENT.

O Father of man, Creator of the universe, to whom all flesh comes for aid and sustenance! we approach thy mercy-seat to crave thy bounty and favour. Our hands are polluted with the stains of sin, and our souls feel the burden of our iniquity, and we have neither temple nor priest to make atonement for our transgressions. In ancient days, indeed, when thy glory dwelt in the house which our fathers had built

for thy service, Thou wast pleased to accept at our hands offerings for sin and trespass, and if the spirit was humbled and entreated for forgiveness, Thou wast graciously pleased to promise a remission of the guilt. But now we approach Thee not with the first-lings of flocks and herds, because the enemy has prevailed, and thy sanctuary has been rendered desolate, and thy altar is overthrown. Still art Thou, O holy One of Jacob! our Father; thy goodness is yet the same it ever was, and thy mercies are not limited, nor in aught abridged by the wrong we have done, and the evil that has come upon us. May it then be thy will to regard us with the compassion which has ever been extended to us; look upon our lowly state and not to the humbleness of our offerings; receive our prayer as incense before Thee, and let the words of our lips arise up to thy throne as an agreeable savour. So that we may experience thy merciful pardon, and be cleansed from our iniquity; since we know Thee as the merciful Ruler who hast borne with our rebelliousness from our first existence as a nation until now. And then shall the redeemed sing thy praise at the return of the captives to their land, and the spirits of the saints rejoice in thy salvation. Amen.

Brethren!

To judge from the goodness of God, supported as we are in this view by the evident words of Revelation, we must come to the conclusion that the happiness of his creatures is the ultimate object of the Creator. If it is true that no joy on earth is permanent, if we are constantly forced to acknowledge that

no fortune is established on an immovable basis: it is equally true that no evil nor suffering is of enduring length, and the deepest misery and the most fearful deprivation will also see their close before the sufferers themselves even expect release. There is perhaps one exception, that is the death of the body which awaits us all; but then it forms part of our existence, it is a vicissitude to which our life is subjected, and will to a surety lead to a farther development in our being not otherwise accessible to us. And with those sufferings which seem to accompany us during our whole earthly life, those diseases which cling to us as a part of ourselves, those struggles which narrow circumstances impose on us from day to day and year to year, long habit makes us at length quite familiar, so that we lose almost a sense of their burden; our mental and bodily conformations both will fashion themselves to answer to our position, and, being thus fitted to bear the ills which beset us, we shall be rendered able to sustain their weight, and be cheerful and active under a pressure and burden which would weigh down others not so heavily laden. For there is a sweetener of sorrows, a comforter to our mourning, a remedy accessible to all who suffer, —it is resignation to the divine will, be this will expressed in whatever form it may; be it poverty, be it ill-health, be it loss of friends, be it living in obscurity, whilst we see others not more industrious than we are, wealthy, others not more prudent than ourselves, enjoying robust health, others near us blessed with the society of those they hold dear, others no more deserving than we are, revelling in the public estimation and earning an imperishable fame.

Let all this meet our view; and still we can bear our lot and be cheerful and happy, provided only we teach ourselves that it is the will of God that so it shall be, and that as his servants we dare not rebel at seeing others more blessed than we are ourselves. But it must not be that grudging resignation which says: "I submit, because I cannot help myself;" no no, *that* is not resignation, it is repining, and it is tantamount to rebellion, accusing the Deity of injustice in laying upon us sorrows which we did not deserve, and which we submit to only because He is strong and we are weak. Resignation to be such, and in order to enable it to render our sufferings tolerable and us cheerful under them, must result from a full conviction that all the acts of the Creator are not merely arising from the considerations that He is powerful, and can therefore do as He pleases, but that He is wise and good, and regulates the affairs of man as best comports with his wisdom and their ultimate happiness. Afflictions therefore should teach us submission to his decrees; they should admonish us that it is best for us to suffer; and then we will regard our God at all times as our Benefactor, though we feel at the same time the weight of his chastisement; and if even the heart bleed because of the sorrow that lies heavily upon us, it can elevate itself in prayer and see the goodness of the Creator in its blessing on others, and view their prosperity and peace without murmur or repining. In truth there is no unmixed evil; in every visitation, if we would only confess our candid feeling, we could discover evidences of mercy, and find cause to thank our

Father for the many favours with which our lot is surrounded.

These observations, rather foreign to the subject which I mean to discuss to-day, are intended to elucidate the general proposition that God wills the happiness of his creatures; and inasmuch as He punishes never more than they are able to bear, we may go a step farther and maintain, that He demands nothing of them which they are not able to execute. In other words, religion as revealed to us must contain all the acts which to do will insure unto us salvation, and must at the same time contain all the dogmas which to believe will be demanded of us as the means of our obtaining the divine favour. To imagine for one moment that this were not so, would be in effect asserting that we had received a religion imperfect in its details, or impracticable in its application to human nature; and still it must be both perfect and practicable, since we as men and Israelites are called upon to obey all the words of the law, and to make them the guides to the path in which we should walk. We may then assume as a principle, that the law of Moses is enough to insure salvation to all who faithfully follow it, and that nothing else than what it contains can be of right demanded of us; because God gave it unto us as the sole expression of his will, and bade us to walk in his ways which are indicated therein. If we now wish to be pleasing to the Lord, or what is the same, if we are desirous of accomplishing our whole duty, we have nothing else to do than to study carefully the whole law, and believe the doctrines which it inculcates and

observe all the precepts the accomplishment of which is in our power.

There may be many persons who, from reasoning on our sinfulness and our proneness to evil, will assert that we of our own means cannot deserve salvation, and in consequence that nothing which we can do will insure it to us. But there is a fallacy at the bottom of this, which a little careful reflection will at once detect. We may admit that we are sinful, and that we are from our natural constitution prone to evil; that, moreover, nothing which we can do is so meritorious in itself, as to deserve the favour of God; since with all our striving we at last do nothing to add the smallest particle to his happiness, or increase his power by any service which we can or do render Him. But this does not say that we cannot please the Lord by our acts, that we are unable to insure our salvation, not so much by words and thoughts, as by actions and the fulfilment of our duties which He has prescribed in his legislation. Let me explain myself a little more at length. If I observe the Sabbath strictly, and abstain from all labour, neglect my usual pursuits, do not speak of my private affairs by which they can be promoted on the days on which bodily exertion is permitted, I actually add nothing to my Creator's beatitude; for He is as perfect without my resting, as He is when I abstain from work; consequently I can *claim* no reward from Him for any services rendered Him by my keeping Sabbath. But the case is very different, if my resting is regarded as a test of obedience, if thereby I prove my devotion to God, if through this means I exhibit to the world the example of relinquishing

my own private interests, because I am certified that so is the command of the Lord. Here then obedience stamps the act as one of merit, it marks it as a surrender of my own judgment to the wisdom of the Supreme, it is an act of faith, it testifies that I hallow his day because I regard Him as my God and King; and therefore I have well-founded hopes that He will accept my acquiescence in his revealed will as a means of purifying my soul, and adding to its means of earning salvation. The same can be said of every religious act which we practise, be the deed small or large, be it a pleasant or a disagreeable duty, which we accomplish; it is not the amount or quality, it is the cheerfulness which hallows it, and consequently will acquire for us the favour of the great Being by whose inspiration this particular act of faith has been demanded of us.

When therefore we are told that of our own selves we cannot merit the favour of God, we must reject the whole idea as unscriptural and erroneous, by a common-sense view of our relation to our Maker. He evidently had a wise purpose in bestowing his law: what now can this be? can it be to make the life of the Israelite one of more hardship than that of any other man? to hedge him round with prohibitions? to surround him with means of transgressions? Evidently not; for this would be to transform the Merciful One into an arbitrary and cruel tyrant who, not enough that He made us sinful by nature, imposed on us the additional curse of the law, by which we must then necessarily become more and more ensnared, so as to secure our utter perdition. This of itself is sufficient to prove that that could not have

been the intention in the giving of the law; because divine goodness could not be thus inconsistent with itself, divine wisdom could not thus contradict its highest predicate of perfection. Still as we have received the law, we must look for a different solution of its multifarious duties and prohibitions; and upon reflecting on the nature of man, the many cares and distractions to which he is constantly subjected, we will readily see that the greater the number of the means of righteousness which are placed at his disposal, the more easy will it be for him to acquire holiness, always supposing that man can attain it, which in fact all religions allege he can do. It was said on a previous occasion, that the accomplishment of great deeds is not within the reach of all men, nor are they attainable by those who do them at all times; once in our days we may be the means of saving a human being; once in our life it may be granted to us to have the holy satisfaction of retrieving from sin a fellow-being by our pious persuasion; but the great majority of our days pass in the execution of little matters, and most men never have an opportunity to do such deeds of mercy as all the world calls great. Religion, accordingly, to be really the purifier of our lives, must be in all respects commensurate with our wants and our nature; it must be practicable, it must be multifarious, accessible alike to the wise and the simple, to the rich and the poor, the powerful and the humble. Now look at the Mosaic law: and what do you discover? It teaches you how to please your God by deeds and by abstinence, how to be obedient in great things, and how to show your reverence in the affairs of every-day life; it asks not of you to be-

lieve impossibilities, nor to obtain favour through debasing the human intellect. It asks simply of you to believe in the existence of the Almighty by whose will you have breath and being, and it demands of you to follow Him in the path on which He is ready to guide you, and that you should submit to be taught by the Wisdom which formed your body and created your soul. Look upon our faith in this simple light, and it is nothing else, take any view of it you please, and the commandments will not present themselves as snares to cause the unwary to stumble, not as means to fasten yet stronger the curse of human folly upon the child of clay; but as the purifiers of this very proneness to sin which we deplore, as the means to remove from us the heart of stone which the unregenerate man, in his ignorant state, bears in his bosom, and to endow us with a clear perception of our relation to our Maker, to mollify the obduracy of the savage state of our nature, to render us brothers of all mankind, and obedient, submissive children to the behests of our God.

Take up any portion of our law—I use this word advisedly rather than religion, because it is in effect a series of enactments to be observed—take it in precepts of personal holiness and in its injunctions regarding the claims of our fellow-men upon us: and you will find therein precisely the same leading features, the evident design of increasing our adoration for God and our readiness to serve those who like us are his creatures. Moreover, to every class of precepts the same admonition is attached. For instance, we are told: "Observe the Sabbath to sanctify it;" the reason given us is "Because thou wast a bondman

in Egypt." So also, when we are commanded, "Love ye the stranger," the cause assigned is again "For ye yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt." True worship of God, a clear acknowledgment of his unity, a total rejection of idolatry, and an entire surrender of our wishes to his wisdom, are thus founded upon the same reason, which bids us to protect the most helpless among the helpless, the poor stranger in a strange land. God saw our affliction, and laid bare his holy arm before the eyes of the idolaters to purchase us to himself as a people; He had cognizance of the wrong strangers suffered in a land which owed them hospitality and kindness; and by this redemption He claims from us that we should only know Him as God, and to confer upon all who need our aid those charitable offices of brotherly love, which were most violated against ourselves not by Egypt alone, but by all the many peoples who have lorded it presumptuously over Jacob's children. We could enlarge on this point, call your attention to many similar injunctions, but one example must suffice for the present; for it is needless to enforce on Israelites the truth and holiness of their faith.

Enough for our purpose that the law of Moses exhibits itself to us as the sole requisite means for insuring salvation; as the only principle needful to reconcile the erring child of earth to the gracious Father in heaven. Within the law is the balm to heal all wounds, within it are all the appliances to assuage the anguish of the agonized spirit when discovering that, led away through love for sin, it has strayed from the fold of the beneficent Shepherd, and joined itself to those who seek for pasture by the broken fountains

of irreligion and false belief, against the approach to which we are warned by many a prophetic voice which speaks to us from amidst the pages of that book which was written for our instruction. It would be evidently a monstrous absurdity to entertain the belief that, notwithstanding the twofold state of our nature, we would be inevitably lost the first time we neglected any of our duties, and that no door would be open to us for a return to our Father's mansion, the moment we had been lured away from duty by the impulse of our passions. For though we have been admonished by the words of Scripture, and shown the righteous way which nothing prevents us from following: still we are surrounded by objects which often call us away into the by-paths of iniquity; since every departure from a strict line of duty, the smallest even, is sin. We have therefore well-founded hopes for believing that there is a pardon for sinners, that the sinning soul shall not be absolutely cut off and forever, whilst there is life left to repent and to return. And truly we will find it so laid down in the law. The Lord is merciful; He is cognizant of the works of his hands, and He waits indulgently from day to day, that perhaps they may become awakened to their sins and seek his footstool, in order to be forgiven. The very idea now of repentance demands a sincere trust in God, or faith, and secondly a perfect abhorrence of the wrong committed; for if we do not have confidence in God, we will not seek his pardon, and if we love the deeds which we have done, we cannot resolve on forsaking them. But it is for such an altered course of life that a remission of guilt is promised, provided that a reparation be made for

the wrong inflicted, in order that we may be reminded that the course of life we have been hitherto pursuing has been one in opposition to the will of God, and that hence we must correct the evil so far as this lies within our power.

As a means of farther effecting this end, were the sacrifices instituted, which a man when acknowledging his sin was ordered to bring to the altar of God, at the place chosen from all the tribes of Israel for the residence of his Name. It was, however, not the victim itself which made the atonement, but the feeling of obedience which prompted the sinner to seek the sacred courts with his sacrifice. All the minute directions which we find recorded, though unimportant to human reason, had to be strictly followed out, before he could look for pardon and atonement. In other words, the same faith which gives value to our greatest deeds of piety and philanthropy, had to preside over the sin- trespass- or burnt-offering before it could be regarded as deserving the acceptance of the Most High. But whether the rich man came with his bullock, the humbler man with his lamb, the countryman with his turtle-dove, and the needy with his little flour, the gifts were all alike accepted; because persons with true devotion brought them to acknowledge their guiltiness, and sincere repentance presided over the sacrifice. The contrite heart, the shame for having offended the Benefactor of the world, entered the precincts of the temple; and He, the Father of man, would not then hide his face; but He graciously was there also, and accepted the atonement from the children of his creation.

Sacrifices, according to this view, were not them-

selves the atonement, but only the means by which the believer might publicly demonstrate his sorrow for his transgressions; since the very presence of the offerer at the temple, coupled with the nature of the sacrifice, demonstrated that, having offended, he hesitated not to avow publicly having trespassed against God, and that he was anxious to deserve the divine favour which he had of right forfeited, through a change of his conduct; nor is it to be doubted that the solemnities consequent upon such an occasion, the splendour of the temple, the chorus of the Levites, the simple magnificence of the priestly orders, all were strongly calculated to make a lasting impression upon the mind of the believer, and leave their traces ineffaceable through all his after-life. But this does not say that there can be no forgiveness without sacrifices, or that, because we have now no temple and no established priesthood, we are unable to obtain the forgiveness of our sins against God. For in the first place, there must have been many cases even during the time of the temple when the sinner was unable to reach the sacred precincts, being detained thence by distance or sickness, and it would not be consonant with mercy to suppose that, in all such instances, the sacrifice being omitted, no humiliation, no repentance, and no deeds of piety and humanity were able to weigh against the non-production of a beast for sacrifice. Besides this, the whole tenor of Scripture teaches that God requires contrition and obedience, not sacrifices; that the broken and humble spirit will not seek forgiveness in vain. Farther, it was already predicted, in the book of Leviticus, that a time would come when, through the sins of our

people, God would not accept the savour of our offerings; and still we were then promised that He would not forsake us, nor forget the covenant which He had made with our fathers. Moreover, it was only for grave offences that sacrifices were at all demanded, whilst minor transgressions, and omissions to do acts of righteousness, were not so to be atoned for, when in truth every wrong done or virtue omitted needs the forgiveness of our God to whom we are accountable. Well, therefore, says the prophet Jeremiah (vii. 21–23): "Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, Add your burnt- to your peace-offerings, and eat the flesh. For I spoke not with your fathers, and I commanded them not on the day I brought them out of Egypt concerning (voluntary) burnt-offering and sacrifice. But this word did I command them, saying, Hearken to my voice, and I will be to you a God, and you shall be to me a people, and ye shall walk in all the way which I will command you, in order that it may be well with you." Obedience, in other words, was asked, and the sacrifices specified were only to serve as a medium of justification, or the outward evidence of a thorough repentance. But our fathers misapprehended their line of duty, they came with sacrifices, whilst the law remained neglected; they mistook the means for the end, and they were then notified by the prophets that their altar should be overthrown, and their sanctuary trodden down by the heavy foot of gentile armies. Still was there to be hope, still was there to be redemption. "The name of the Lord is a tower of strength, to it the righteous runneth and is protected." The same tower is yet standing, brothers of the house of Israel; the same

strong hand is stretched forth to redeem our souls from death, provided only we abhor our misdeeds, and knock with all our might at the gates of mercy; for they are the entrances to the house of our beneficent Father, and He stands ready with open arms to receive us back in his presence. It is He who says (Isaiah xliii. 25):

אנכי אנכי הוא מחה פשעיך למעני וחטאתיך לא אזכר : ישע' מג' כה' :

"It is I, it is I, who blot out thy transgressions for my own sake, and thy sins I will not remember."

Not for the sake of our righteousness, not because we deserve his favour, will He be gracious to us; but only because He finds delight in mercy, because He wishes to bless the children of the dust, though they are laden with sin. O let us then turn to this blessed Fountain, let us hasten to Him to cleanse ourselves from the pollution of sin, and He will cause our misdeeds to vanish like a cloud, and we shall stand pure in his presence, and He will bless us with his spirit, and ransom the captives from all the earth to be again his own treasure, as of old. Amen.

Nissan 2d. } 5607.
March 19th. }

DISCOURSE IV

THE MOSAIC POLITY AND SACRIFICES.

God of our fathers, the eternal and exalted Ruler of the world! look with favour upon the remnant of thy people in all their dwelling-places, and hear their voice from wheresoever their prayer may be offered up unto Thee. From one end of the world to the other mankind acknowledge thy existence; for in the very idols which they frame, they confess themselves subject to a creative power which controls them; yet they all walk not in thy light, and they refuse to receive instruction from the revelation which Thou hast made known. Yet we have received the knowledge of thy truth, and been trained in the faith which Thou didst impart to our fathers, thy servants, and we are thus freed from the bonds of superstition and unbelief, which are the heritage of other men, for which grace we return thanks to thy blessed Name. But let us entreat Thee to let thy glory be made manifest to all the earth, cast down the altars of false worship, and rend asunder the vail which is spread over the gentiles, that they may look upon Thee as Thou hast taught us to do, that they may walk in thy light, which was kindled at Sinai, as we do in obedience to thy decrees. And then shall we live securely in our land, and our sacrifices will again be acceptable to Thee as in former years and in the days of old, when

Thou alone wilt be King over all the earth, and thy name be adored as one, as Thou art indeed the sole Creator, blessed for evermore. Amen!

Brethren!

Let us speak about the future of our nation in comparison with the past, in order to strengthen ourselves in faith, and to be obedient to the demands which our religion makes on us. There are men among us, I hope they are but few, who say, with all vehemence and loud declamation, that we are forever to wander outcast and scorned in foreign lands, and that the commonwealth of Israel sunk to perpetuity into disjointed fragments from the time that disunion among the tribes, in the first instance, and the inroads of foreign conquerors in the second, destroyed the adherence of the people to the house of David; that our existence is to be merely spiritual, not national; that we are to merge quietly into the nations among which we dwell, and should seek for no other redemption than a general enlightenment of the world, and the universal diffusion of the monotheistic principle of our religion. Two things, however, are acknowledged by the supporters of this theory, the first, that the present state of belief and religion among mankind is not to be permanent, and the second, that we can on no account be permitted to give up our own faith and practices, and thus be lost among the nations, or what is the same thing that, though they would wish us to be, and remain incorporated among the various states, we should continue to be Jews in practice, distinguished thus from our fellow-citizens of other persuasions in all that relates to our bearing

in reference to worship and the arrangement of our family-concerns.

It would be all very well if we had no prophetic records to refer to as arbiters in the question; but if words mean anything at all, they to a certainty signify that not alone are the two above points to be accomplished, but the national restoration of Israel is also to be effected in a manner best consonant with the wisdom and power of Providence. It is not to be denied by any ingenious pleading, that God must have had a great object in view by the establishment of the descendants of Abraham as a peculiar people, living in a country given to them as their property, governed by laws and a polity eminently their own, however they might be in themselves the product of divine revelation; for though no human counsel was called in to perfect the details, the whole was precisely adapted to the character of the people, and the country they inhabited, whereas, it would be almost impossible to predicate the entire legislation for any people other than Israel, and a country materially differing from Palestine, I refer, as regards the latter, to the regulation of the festivals in connexion with the annual harvesting, and other similar laws.

Nor it is not a matter of doubt, but one deducible from the nature of the Divinity, that the divine decrees are based upon the solid foundation of truth, and are not subject to change or abridgment; since the Lord cannot change his opinion through the accession of a new light in the process of time, which was beyond his reach at the beginning of things. Consequently it follows, that the laws regarding Israel as a people must always continue authoritative, if even

not executed for a time through circumstances over which they themselves have no control, so that, whenever the circumstances inimical to them cease, they may resume their ancient customs and usages, as though no interruption had ever taken place. To presume that this were not so, would be denying the permanence of religion, and ascribe vacillation to God; whereas we are constantly told by all prophets that precisely the reverse is the case, if even simple reasoning from philosophically demonstrated premises were insufficient to convince us of this truth. But with the permanence of the particulars of the Mosaic polity is inseparably connected the nationality of the Israelites upon the soil of Palestine, in order that the annual offerings and sacrifices may be brought in their proper season, as we are commanded in the law. Let us instance the festivals of Passover and Pentecost. On the first we are commanded to offer an omer-full of barley, as the first produce of the harvest, and on the latter two loaves of fresh wheaten flour, both as national offerings to the Bestower of fruitfulness and plenty. We need not argue that no country in the regions of cold Europe, or northern America and Asia, nor any situated on the south side of the equator, could enable us to fulfil these particular injunctions at their respective periods; for in the one case the grain ripens at a later season, in the other in an opposite part of the year. There are certainly other lands where the harvest is as early as in Palestine; but this much is certain, that our own ancient heritage enabled us to fulfil the injunctions in question without any difficulty, and hence, to say the least, it is not less advantageously situated in this respect

than any other land under the sun. This consideration may appear to some a small matter; but in truth it is not so; for it proves that the most consummate wisdom directed the arrangement of the details of the law, so that they should tally faithfully with one another. If now, to resume the argument, our religion is in its nature permanent, and requires at the same time a certain locality for its perfect execution: it follows that a time will come, when the people professing this religion shall be enabled to fulfil to the letter all the duties enjoined on them, precisely as they were originally commanded; and since they are now so situated through acts not their own, though they came as an infliction for their sins, that they are not enabled to assemble at the place where the peculiar rites of their faith are to be observed, they will not be held responsible nor accounted as sinful for not fulfilling all those peculiar duties, which are bound by an express injunction of the law to the country of Palestine.

This being the case, and hardly any believing Israelite will deny our premises, it likewise follows that our redemption from our present state of bondage in some lands, and the subjection to antibiblical laws in all, cannot be accomplished by a mere civil emancipation; for this would still leave us beyond the possibility of satisfying the demands of our religion. We do not ask merely to be free from tyrannical rule, but to see the supremacy of our code restored. There may perhaps be a few unbelievers who pretend to say that the pains and penalties of the Mosaic legislation are barbarous, and uncongenial with the progress of an enlightened civilization; but they surely cannot

have correctly examined the details of jurisprudence it lays down; nor the great safeguards it throws around all the members of the commonwealth; nor the deep and searching inquiry which constitutes a prominent feature in the arraignment of criminals; nor the responsibility of the witnesses for false charges, even at the risk of their lives; nor the institutions of the cities of refuge to prevent the disgraceful scenes of private vengeance, which disfigure modern times even with all their boasted refinement; nor the perfect security of property, both personal and landed estates, to the possessor; nor the inviolability of character, the absence of the branding-iron for minor criminals, the public whipping-post, the sale of the maintenance of the poor to the lowest bidder, the venality of a corrupt system of justice; nor, in short, the whole tenor of our legislation proper, so pure in its details, so holy in its principles.

The crimes for which death is the forfeit are certainly more numerous than the fancies of modern philanthropists would sanction, if their opinions were to be consulted. Let it, however, not be forgotten that the penalty of death, denounced in the Mosaic Law, is only against crimes of the gravest character: murder, incest, disobedience against paternal authority, wounding or cursing father and mother, rebellion against the chief judicial authority, false accusation where life was at stake, violation of the Sabbath, blasphemy, idolatry, seduction to idolatry, false prophecy, incest, and, finally, selling into slavery a fellow-Israelite. No one need expose himself to the commission of any of these deeds; consequently any citizen of the state can escape the utmost penalty of the law

without any difficulty; none could be seized and condemned by the arbitrary command of any ruler, nor could conviction take place except in open court, upon the clearest and most irrefragable testimony of two men of known probity, upon their parole evidence, given in the presence of the criminal, that they saw him engaged in the crime, and, as is said, with warning him of the consequence of his misdeed. Life so hedged round with judicial defences could not be easily put in jeopardy; and when the doom was, notwithstanding all this, pronounced by a majority of the judges, never less than twenty-three, for this was our practice, of whom thirteen must have been for conviction, the guilt must have been so incontestably proved that the malefactor himself could not have complained of injustice. I know that efforts are now making to banish from the codes all punishments of death for whatever offence, upon the ground that we have no right to take life, since we cannot restore it after taking it away. But have we any more right to deprive a man of his personal liberty, shut him up like a noxious beast for life in the narrow walls of a prison cell, barred out from all intercourse with the world, even the good, save the few that may happen to seek his prison-house by special permission of his jailors? A moral discourse is not the most fitting vehicle for the discussion. I only touched upon it incidentally, in connexion with the law of Moses. I must therefore be brief, and answer the query with a single remark. Society, without referring to religion as the basis thereof, has a claim upon each one of its members, that he shall be pledged, with all he possesses, for his good behaviour towards all others; he

therefore stakes his property, his liberty, and his life, that is, all which he can have, that he will be amenable with them all in case he do anything to the injury of his neighbour individually, or the state in general. Hence if he commits a fraud or theft, his property may be taken from him; if he disturbs the public peace, he may be put under restraint by imprisonment, if a fine previously imposed should have failed to arrest his unlawful behaviour; and lastly, if he deprives another of life, his own earthly existence is the only forfeit which is at all commensurate with the violence committed; it is not that the dead demands the requital of life with life, but only to place others in security, that murders shall not be committed, and because the state or society at large cannot become of right chargeable with the safe-keeping of a man who has shown such a recklessness of the personal rights of others, that his escape or release may expose those who are innocent, and therefore have a right to protection, to renewed danger from his violent and bloodthirsty disposition. The ridiculous sympathy with criminals of the highest degree, together with the trickery of the law, which will not be satisfied with the most positive proof of guilt, is only calculated to rob society of its security, to arm man against his brother, in order to seek justice by his own strong hand, since an appeal to courts of miscalled justice often fails to redress the grievances of which he complains. Besides, it levels all crimes by making them all punishable with the same visitation, the prison being for each and for all the only corrective; and the duration of the confinement, though in some cases called perpetual, is necessarily left to the arbi-

trary will of extra-judicial authorities, which every state or commonwealth is compelled to recognize. *That* society is therefore the best governed, in *that* community are life, limb, liberty, and goods the safest, where each individual is held strictly accountable, and the laws are so administered, that the certainty of punishment is always at hand to check the criminal inclinations, which will more or less rise up in the minds of most men.

Judged by this standard, the Mosaic polity is of all others the only one which apportions punishment to crime, which in its worst inflictions regards the criminal as a brother, whose misdeeds, if they can be amended with minor visitations, can be thus atoned for, and he be restored to the bosom of society; whereas, when this is not possible, he must sacrifice his earthly existence for the happiness of others. We could enlarge; but we must forbear for the present; enough we have shown that the permanence of the law, in its civil details, no less than those properly called religious, can be maintained to its fullest extent, should our state be ever restored, and we need not dread the severity of some enactments, even when viewed by the light of an advanced civilization and the march of discovery, so far superior to what was known at the time when Moses wrote down the statutes which he had received from the Most High.

The reasonableness of the sacrifices and offerings, to continue the subject with which we started, is not deducible from human wisdom, but simply we are to abide by them as they are divine decrees. I know well enough that many good men among us and the gentiles have endeavoured to establish their origin in

something to which paganism had accustomed our fathers; but such a solution does not seem consonant with the wisdom of God, nor with the fact that offerings are mentioned as already in existence with the immediate children of Adam, consequently they are almost as old as the presence of man on earth. It is enough for us to know that they became incorporated in the Mosaic legislation as a duty appertaining to the temple-service on every day in the year, and no reason was assigned other than that they should be, as the Bible terms it, ריח ניחח "an agreeable savour," which, so to say, the Lord of all would smell as their smoke ascended, and receive it as a token of obedience of his servants, for which He would accept them in favour. Many, not satisfied with viewing sacrifices in the light of a statute, given as a test of obedience, for which, therefore, no other reason can be discovered, have endeavoured to give them a mystical, or with others a typical solution, and arranged thus all to their own satisfaction, and have arrived at length at the conclusion that they have ceased forever, the object for which they were instituted having been accomplished. But the words of Scripture bear no trace of any such grounds; we are merely told that so should be done to obtain for us atonement; but nothing is hinted of any especial mystery being connected with a burnt- or sin-offering, nor that either of them was a type of any event, past or future. Consequently, if our position is correct, that the whole scheme was a special ordinance, neither originating in pagan rites, nor terminable by any supposititious fulfilment of their object at the happening of any particular event: it must result as a necessary deduc-

tion, that we are not empowered to assume that the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem will *not* be acceptable again at a time to come; but the rather, that it is absolutely requisite, both from reason and prophecy that, with the restoration of the Jewish people, the sacrifices, with all the other institutions of the priesthood, will be likewise re-established. The law was given to be forever remembered; years and ages of troubles have passed over it no less than over its possessors; and still it is the study of millions of enlightened spirits, and it has exerted, and continues to do so still, an irresistible power over the march of civilization. Can it then be presumed for a moment that any portion of its contents should be a mere accommodation to circumstances and, the religious enactments especially, only inserted to act as a mere negation to other ideas foreign to its holiness? Consequently the whole of it must be of equal importance, of equal duration, as all its parts are of equal sanctity, and that therefore nothing contained therein but will again be practised, whenever the opportunity and occasion may again demand them.

As to the possibility of the restoration, it is not necessary to frame any argument. God redeemed us before this from the slavery of Egypt, and again rescued us from the power of Babylon, and both times we journeyed to Palestine, established the worship in the temple, and resisted successfully the foreign foe. Why He should not be enabled to do the same deed again, is beyond the power of my imagination to ascertain; the unwillingness of the scattered Israelites themselves is the greatest difficulty; but in his good providence He will devise the means, equally

as He did when in Egypt the contented slaves said to Moses: "Leave off from us, that we may serve the Egyptians; for we had better serve the Egyptians than perish in the wilderness." But who heeded their opposition? who regarded the refusal of their tyrant to grant their freedom? Let sacred history tell, how the reluctant obtained their liberty, and how the unwilling ruler was forced to yield. And now, has the Lord forsaken Israel? Do his thunders sleep? have his lightnings lost their brightness and their fearful force? Look up to the heavens, whether dressed with the brilliance of the day, or clad in the sombre garments of the night; let the seasons speak, whether they do not change in their wonted regularity, and produce plenty or dearth as their Master and ours may decree; ask of the ocean whether his roarings are not controlled by the same mighty Hand that cleft before the ransomed the waters of the Arabian Sea: and then tell me, that the same Force which scattered us cannot gather us again together, that the same Being who broke the power of ruthless rulers cannot accomplish the same work again, that the God who established his kingdom in the midst of our tribes, who sighed for the galling bonds of slavery, will not come again to reign triumphantly as the King of Israel and the Chief of the nations? We may be unwilling to go forth; we may prefer the lands of our captivity where we enjoy freedom and security as the boon only of righteous gentiles; but prophecy tells us that we shall nevertheless be sent forward from our exile, again to inhabit the hills and valleys of lovely Palestine, then restored to its fertility, its sweet soil cleansed from the foot of maraud-

ing savages that now defile it by their noxious presence. In mute surprise, unbelief will ask in the words of the prophet Isaiah (lxvi. 8), "Who hath heard the like? who hath seen such things? shall a land be made to travail in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? that Zion hath travailed, also brought forth her children?" And we are answered:

והביאו את כל אחיכם מכל הגוים מנחה לה׳ בסוסים וברכב ובצבים ובפרדים ובכרכרות על הר קדשי ירושלם אמר ה׳ כאשר יביאו בני ישראל את המנחה בכלי טהור בית ה׳: ישעיה סו׳ כ׳:

"And they shall bring all your brethren out of all nations as an offering unto the Lord, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." (Verse 20.)

Let, like Pharaoh of old, the rulers of the earth say, "We know not the Lord, nor will we let Israel go free;" let us say, "We will rather be subject to many kings and states than free citizens of Palestine under the government of the Lord's anointed:" the word which was spoken before the overthrow of our state will be fulfilled, and in one day, like it was at the going forth from Egypt, shall a nation be born, and carried forward to their inheritance, purified from their transgressions, through the long captivity which they had to endure, and the many persecutions they had to encounter for the sake of their faith. The place of assembly will be the holy mountain at Jerusalem, and the polity will be the one which Moses

ordained through the command of the Supreme; for we are told that there will be "priests and Levites, to stand before the sanctuary to make atonement for the people." (Ezek. xlv. 17.) And as respects all the world, each man will cast away his follies and idols, and mankind will seek to know the Creator of all heaven and earth, acknowledging that they had hitherto walked in darkness and embraced folly instead of wisdom, falsehood instead of truth. But then, when the son of David reigns in peace and in glory, when the law of God will be inscribed in the hearts of all, and no one lift his sword against his brother, sacrifices will ascend on high from pure and undefiled hands, justice will erect her throne in every spot to decide with equity for high and low, and all flesh will come on every new-moon day from month to month, and Sabbath to Sabbath, on the days held sacred by the ordinance of God among the children of Israel, to bow down and to worship at the shrine of the Lord, in fear and in reverence. May this be speedily accomplished, and our eyes behold the glory of God. Amen!

Nissan 29th.
April 15th. } 5607.*

* The date of this is not certain, as the original MS. cannot be found.

DISCOURSE V.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF JUDAISM.

GUARDIAN of man! God of everlasting! how glorious art thou in Thy unsearchable greatness, which is displayed over the face of creation, like a canopy of light encircling all that exists; for whithersoever we turn our ardent gaze, there too we shall meet with the undeniable traces of thy presence. Whether we dwell in the farthest East, or seek a home in the most distant West; whether we are surrounded by the ice of the frozen poles, or pant exhausted amidst the heats of the burning tropics, it is only thy hand that guides, thy eye which sees us. In the gloom of night and in the brilliancy of the day thy providence keeps watch over us, and our feet are made to stand firm, or our steps are made to totter, just as it pleases thy will to hold us up or to cast us down. O that this truth might be firmly enthroned in the being of our soul! that we may thereby be rendered conscious of our accountability, ever prepared to follow the dictates of thy will, and be ready at all times to follow thy guidance, and shun sin and pursue righteousness. Be it then thy will, to strengthen the desire for good inherent in us, and aid us in our struggle in the subduing of our bad passions; so that we may escape from the snare of iniquity, and stand in thy presence as children of salvation, as those whose God

Thou art, who are accepted of Thee their Maker. Amen.

Brethren!

No doubt you have been often assailed in your intercourse with your gentile neighbours with the objection, whenever religion became the topic of conversation, that our faith was merely a ceremonial burdensome sort of belief, a something in which the spirit has but little aliment, and in which the higher duties of humanity occupy only a subordinate position, or played at least a very inferior part. There are also no doubt men who call themselves Jews, who nevertheless from a sheer unacquaintance with their spiritual concerns are of the opinion just stated, and decry Judaism as a gross system of ceremonialities and outward observances. But if we come to look into the Scriptures for light, nay if we only observe the practical effect of our faith in the conduct of a believing Israelite, we must readily discover that our religion lacks nothing of all that can elevate the mind, refine the sentiment, and lead man to look up, in all things, for aid and consolation to his Father in heaven. There is a nervousness in many persons when religion is spoken of, for fear that the one they profess should be found to contain the largest number of positive duties, as though this circumstance must necessarily derogate from its usefulness and holiness; and hence they are so anxious to make it appear that the essence or spirit of Judaism does not consist in them but in something else which is more akin to those easy religions where belief is everything, and observances as such are of very subordinate im-

portance. Now it is not to be denied, that belief, faith, or the acquiescence in the truth of certain fundamental principles must be held as the basis of any line of conduct; for without such belief no one could be induced to pursue any course of life; but as Jews we must deem it equally futile to be satisfied with mere belief, if the result springing from it should be only a reproduction of itself; and hence we need express no alarm for the soundness of the law, because it ostensibly demands a fulfilment of many outward acts as obligatory in consonance with its principles. Let us depart a little from the strict line of argument into illustration. Faith or belief demands that we believe or receive as true one or more doctrines without which our religion or any other religion cannot have any existence. This does not mean that we must not investigate, whether this one is or these many principles are true or not; only that, if we say we belong to such a one or the other church, society, or religion, we have satisfied ourselves that the dogmas on which it rests are true, so far as we can discover. There are, however, multitudes who merely receive opinions without search or inquiry; they are taught by parents, preceptors, or associates, or they as it were intuitively receive certain impressions, and they accept them as proved, regardless that they have instituted no inquiry whether there may or may not be some fundamental errors in the very inception of their received views. But conviction is often the result of the most careful analysis which the mind is capable of; there are large numbers, and have always been, who bring to the study of religion an extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of nature, a fa-

miliar knowledge of antiquity and the history of the day, and a penetrating insight into the character and functions of man. Men, such as these, have also come to the conclusion that there is good reason for the acceptance of religion, and they feel accordingly within themselves a conviction of the truths it teaches; they believe as much therefore in the existence of the GODHEAD and the existence of a REVELATION, as though they had become practically acquainted with the Creator, and had themselves received direct instruction from Him. We will admit that the exact sciences, such as mathematics and chemistry, are capable of a better demonstration than religion is. But though they proceed from clearly laid down principles, it is nevertheless true that in them also we must assume certain axioms before we can proceed to build our superstructures. Those who know the sciences will readily understand my meaning; and to those who do not, it may be sufficient to state that the most magnificent triumphs of astronomy, astonishing and *true* though they be, rest at last upon a foundation which assumes certain things as true without any possibility of proving their correctness, farther than that they are evident and can be actually brought into practice. If we proceed equally with religion, and assume that nothing we see around us can make itself; that every being we have any ocular or sensual perception of is destructible, renewable, and therefore finite: we come to the next step, that there must be a Power somewhere, though we cannot show, nor demonstrate, nor understand how He exists, who is of necessity not alone able to produce the things the origin of which we *feel* must be derived; but who is

indestructible by them and superior to each one separately or to the whole of them combined, or in other words, the weakness of each separate part of outward nature, the liability of all to decay, and the conviction that all must have had an origin, lead us to the adoption of the idea of an omnipotent Creator, the Author of all we know, the Ruler of all of which we have any conception.

If we now go farther into an inquiry into the nature and organization of the sentient beings on earth, that is to say into the constitution, mental and physical, of men: we will be struck with the remarkable fact, that though all claim to have a notion of what is called among them *right* and *wrong*, few only agree as to the precise items which make up the general idea of these two principles. Moreover we shall speedily arrive at the conviction that we have all, individually and collectively, a strong and paramount interest in the idea which prevails on this point; since each of us is individually interested to a considerable extent, as regards his personal safety, domestic comforts, and the pursuits he may engage in, in the whole range of conduct which others may deem it right to pursue towards himself. For instance, every one is especially interested that no other man shall be permitted to take away his life, or to wound and maim him; to enter his dwelling and to deprive him of his wife and children; and lastly, to obstruct him at pleasure in the prosecution of his employment, and to take from him the fruits of his industry.—It is now evident, I say, to a mere cursory observer even, that mankind are not all agreed about their ideas concerning this right and wrong, and that moreover this disagreement is greatly

modified by or depending on the peculiar conception they have respectively of the character of the Creator; or that in fact the so-called moral obligations which mankind acknowledge are in conformity to the speculative or assumed opinions regarding the Godhead which they place as the foundation of their systems; and this holds good not alone with distant communities who have from some cause or the other adopted either simultaneously or by degrees certain peculiar ideas or matters of belief, but among different persons of the same state, city, community, or lastly family; since in all there is a marked and perceptible difference of conduct, just in proportion as they have one or the other opinion in regard to the Universal Cause from whom all originates. This being so, and your own experience will convince you of it, the deepest thinker and the most astute philosopher, though they at the first outset are devoid of any positive belief in anything, may at length come to this simple inquiry: "Since we see that there is a Supreme Intelligence discoverable in everything which we behold with our naked eye, and also in the immensity of space whither we penetrate with the instruments of science; since we discover that man possesses in a remarkable degree the power of judging and weighing with his mind any fact presented to him: is it to be supposed that though instructed in everything else, he should have been left altogether ignorant of his relation towards his fellow-man and to his Creator? Of himself man seems utterly unable to solve the various problems of moral government; for all experience hitherto has taught us that not two will come to the same conclusion in this respect;

consequently there can be no moral guidance, unless there be a direct instruction from the Creator to the creature, by which he can, if so he is inclined, frame a universal and uniform rule of conduct for all circumstances and throughout all generations. This question must present itself to every thinker; and then he will readily cast a view around himself to see *where* such an instruction can be found; and if he should then be presented with a volume of the Scriptures for the first time in his life, and trace therein the uniform laws of charity and universal benevolence: he would necessarily come to the conclusion that at length his search is satisfied, and that, although there are things which he cannot at once adopt, they are in the main precisely such rules for the moral government of the world as in their tendency will be permanent and universally beneficial, consequently that the Scriptural records contain precisely that sort of code which will answer for the moral government of the world in regard to the right and the wrong, and that therefore every one by conforming thereto will contribute to the well-being of his fellow-men, and secure, so far as may be, his own personal security and well-being.

I remarked just now that at a first view of the Scriptures an unprejudiced thinker would come to the conclusion that in the main they contain what he could readily adopt, whilst there are other things in which he could not acquiesce at once without farther inquiry. I refer in the latter clause to the ceremonial observances, which have no reference ostensibly to the moral conduct of man to man, and seem therefore merely arbitrary enactments without any just reason for their existence. But we could easily satisfy him

of their necessity and propriety, if we recur to the time and circumstances at and under which the whole code in question was made known. We might tell him that history teaches us that, from the very beginning of the presence of man on earth, he was certified of his duties and responsibilities; but that he soon forgot or neglected the demands made of him, though they were solely given for his own benefit. That at length after the mutations of centuries had still found man rejecting instruction as often as it had been renewed, the Almighty created a new thing, a nation, that is to say, one with peculiar usages and customs, who were to become proprietors of the code in which the Almighty had made his will known, and they were to retain its guardianship until such time, as the remaining portions of mankind should come to acknowledge the same fundamental principle and adopt it as their guide and law; in the words of a portion of that very record, which are: "O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge on the day of trouble! unto Thee shall nations come from the ends of the earth, and say, Nothing but falsehood have our fathers inherited, vanity, wherein there is no profit." (Jeremiah xvi. 19.) We can tell him that the only way to preserve this precious knowledge of truth and morality was by surrounding its professors with such a line of defences, as would prevent their being assimilated to, and thereby absorbed by the large masses of men who would not admit their divinely-revealed opinions of the Deity, nor adopt the peculiar laws which had in this manner been delivered to them. The ceremonial duties are therefore easily shown to be of great significancy and meaning; they

are the landmarks by which the believers in revelation can regulate themselves, and preserve at the same time for their own persons and their families that acquaintance with their relation to God and man, which was given to them when first they appeared in the world as an independent and distinct people, as a separate and marked race though but comparatively few in number.—The ceremonies in themselves are however of such a nature as to inflict no injury upon any man; they are matters of observance for the individual or the people; yet in no one thing do they trench upon the rights and personal security of others, whether they adopt them or not; they were to limit and restrain men in certain things, and thereby make them better members of society and more devout followers of religion than they would otherwise be; especially was this to be so with the people to whom they were given, to distinguish them from all others by outward tokens and visible means, and as being distinct and separate from those who did not think themselves thus bound and restricted.

What harm can therefore be attributed to the ceremonies? are they so derogatory to human reason that we should be ashamed of them, or hide ourselves in an obscure corner when practising them? is it consonant with common sense for us to yield our own received opinions that we may not be taunted with being ceremonialists? It is strange indeed how little many of us understand the full strength of their religion. They ought to be told over and over again that Judaism is a system of practical duties based upon belief, and that anything short of this standard is not Judaism; make any system ever so beautiful,

poetical, and enchanting, speak of its purifying the soul, rendering it fit for heaven; but unless it be full of activity, full of life and works, it is not the religion which we have received from Sinai; and this is at last that which we should strive to accomplish, and endeavour to conform to as the standard set up for us by our divine Legislator. Were it indeed that Moses, or any one else, had of his own heart invented the law of Israel, no matter how many good ordinances it contained: we might then find reason to choose and to reject, just as our fancy might dictate. But, if our religion is worth anything at all, if it really deserves to be called divine in its origin and development, we cannot permit ourselves to measure the importance or otherwise of any of its ordinances by any scale short of itself; for the whole law as we have received it is beyond the reach of human reason. And to descend to particularities, what effect is religion to have on the mind of man? Evidently a twofold one, to acknowledge his subjection to God, his Creator, and to exercise justice in the fullest sense of the word towards other mortals. Whatever, then, promotes these two objects,—and religion can have no other, since we ourselves are individually among those to whom we have duties to perform,—is a legitimate branch of religion, and deserves, nay demands, the most careful observance. Ceremonies however were given to us that we might remember the Creator in every stage and position of life, and consequently be reminded of our accountability for all our acts and omissions; and, in consequence, being so reminded and taught, we shall be naturally the more induced to watch carefully our own conduct, so that we may

do no injury to our neighbour, or abridge his rights and possessions in the smallest degree, whether this might be for our advantage or not. What is it to us that other religions demand less duty? permit greater license? have few or no prohibitions against many indulgences interdicted to us? When, lo! these indulgences were not granted to Israelites, nor are calculated to educate a kingdom of priests and a holy nation of missionaries, who by their living teaching, their silent example, and their constant presence, are ultimately to reform the whole earth, and render it the throne of the Blessed One who lives forever. We have no reason whatever to search into the gospel, Koran, the Vedas, the Roman or French code, no motive to inquire of a heathen philosophy or the discoveries of modern seekers for wisdom, to know how we are to act: all is clearly pointed out to us in its principal features in the written word which is ours, and the observances under the same that have come down to us from many ages of pious predecessors, and form those decisions and particular duties, which now constitute our customs and observance under and in consonance with the law.

As respects to ceremonies themselves they constitute the active part of religion; they are the daily or periodical exercises, as the case may be, of faith and obedience to the teaching of God. Were it that all religion should consist in mere acts of humanity and moral propriety, all our duties might then be performed from a cold calculation of personal advantage; since we might naturally expect a reciprocity in kind for whatever good we executed. But now we have a number of commandments which we are to observe

from motives of gratitude solely, or as remembrances of the favours which we have received individually or nationally from the Giver of all good; and we have thus an opportunity of being active in piety although we care not to have the eyes of our fellow-men directed upon us, and without expecting the least reward or return from them; since the deeds in question do not concern others, and have no ostensible bearing upon the welfare of society at large.

But we may perhaps be told, that there are many ceremonial Jews who are dishonest and immoral, who neglect the duties towards men, whilst they are strictly observant of all the outward forms of religion. For argument's sake we will admit the fact to be so. But it only says that we have people among us, like all other classes, who either do not understand their whole duty, or fail of reaching the standard of perfection which is prescribed to them. Men like these have taken an imperfect view of religion, and are therefore in error; but the duties they fulfil, whilst they are thus imperfect, are nevertheless part and parcel of what the Lord demands of them to do.— Perhaps it may be said farther that the Jews are not spiritual enough, their whole religion is too sensual, too much given to externals. But again there is a misconception of the case. Let us examine, as I have said already, the life of a pious Israelite, and he will be found truthful, obedient, charitable, resigned under suffering, laborious in his daily avocations, cheerful in every state of life, and meeting death with the calmness becoming a man, the child of God, who sees his end approaching. I could increase easily the enumeration of the spiritual qualities of a good Jew;

but there is no need of pronouncing a eulogy upon our own people however well deserved it might be; we may appeal to history to prove how we bore with patience, meekness and resignation whatever ills the world without was pleased to inflict upon us for the profession of our faith; and say what gave us this moral courage, what strengthened our spirit so that we could bear the heavy yoke which was laid on us, but that very religion which you say is not spiritual enough? And this was in times when the observances were more minutely regarded than they now are in many places; and still when did the world behold more devotion, more self-sacrifice, a purer faith, and a more unshrinking trust in the God of all the world? And shall we, the descendants and successors of so many holy martyrs, now turn the murderous knife against the bosom of our venerable mother, the religion which caused our existence, to undervalue what she teaches, to slay the spirit which she has breathed into us? Such a procedure would rejoice the heart of those who have striven so many centuries to blot out our name from the records of nations; thus we would prepare to throw ourselves into the arms of those whose embrace would bring death to Judaism; for it is only by its preserving its peculiar national features, by hedging round its followers with restrictions, that it can maintain its position amidst the struggle for empire among the contending opinions which now agitate the sons of man. Yield up the veneration for our ceremonial observances, and what would distinguish the Jew from another man? The spirit cannot be discovered, its workings are in secret, and we could never unite by mere fellowship

alone, if we have not outward conduct to mark us as belonging to the same class of believers, to those who have the same past, who hope to enjoy the same future.

Lastly, as regards the little importance which acts of humanity are alleged to possess among us, it is needless to advance any refutation after what has been said already. The Israelites are moreover proverbially kind to the poor, and their hands are seldom red with the blood of a brother; robberies and high-handed crimes against individuals, or the state, are of rare occurrence among them; and seldom does the cry of distress from even those who have habitually oppressed them appeal to them for relief in vain. Our outward religion, in brief, does not stifle in the slightest the aspirations after the highest perfection; and a system so constituted lacks nothing of being considered a worthy emanation of the highest Wisdom. But as regards the multitude of our duties we ought to rejoice in their possession, that we have thus received the means of rendering ourselves deserving of the mercy which is promised to us as a reward for obedience. Let us reflect well, that when enjoining kindness to the poor, it is commanded to us: "Thou shalt not take from him interest or increase, and thou shalt be afraid of thy God, and let thy brother live with thee;" and respecting ceremonial duties we are warned (Lev. xxvi. 2).

את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני ה׳ :
ויקרא כו׳ ב׳ :

"My sabbaths shall ye observe, and my sanctuary shall ye reverence; I am the Lord."

This must teach us that not he fears the Lord who forgets to have compassion on his poor brother, and brother means any one who like him bears the impress of the human face divine; not he can claim to have fulfilled his duties who hears unmoved the groans of suffering without hastening to its relief; nor is he a true son of Israel who imagines that he can bribe his way to heaven, who fancies that by scattering charity, by bestowing what he does not need himself, by spending some time which hangs heavily on his hand in deeds of benevolence, he has accomplished the whole task of justification. No! brethren! we must labour assiduously as men and as Israelites, to obey the will of our Father; He bids us to be holy; He bids us to remember the poor; He bids us to observe his Sabbaths, the days which He declared holy; and with all his precepts He enforces our obedience by declaring that He is the Lord, everliving, omnipresent to reward and to punish. Let us heed then these behests, these calls for immortality; and as sure as our Father lives, so sure will be our recompense; and when our days draw to a close, we shall be like the setting-sun, throwing a more beautiful radiance though the whole day has been bright, as it hastens to its close; and then the righteousness which we have acquired will go before us, and the glory of God will receive our spirit in favour, and treasure it up in the bond of life. Amen.

Iyar 21st.
May 7th. } 5607.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH.

From Paran thy glory dawned upon our fathers, and from Seïr's mountain thy brightness burst over them, on that blessed day, when Thou camest, O God! to teach thy people truth and knowledge; and creation stood mute, the earth shook, the mountains were moved to their centres, whilst thy own omnipotent Voice broke over the wide expanse of mount and plain, and penetrated into hearts unused to knowledge, and it took up its abode in the deepest recesses of the souls of thy heritage to dwell therein forever. O how glorious is the gift thus bestowed! how perfect the wisdom thus infused! and though generation upon generation has been borne to the grave, though countless hosts have sunk before the destroyer of life: thy law stands unshaken, and its precepts are revered by the many who look up to Thee for aid, who wait alone upon thy salvation. And we thank Thee, Father of Israel! that Thou hast been thus mindful of us, and that according to thy promise thy goodness has not forsaken us in our affliction. Be it now thy will, to continue to us to the end of days thy protection, and to shield us against the assaults of the ungodly, and the machinations of those who love not the nation whom Thou chosest as thy people; and bear us safely as the father bears away his child from

danger, and let thy holy spirit dwell within us; so that all the world may see and know that we have received thy favour, and that we are in truth called by thy Name, a people, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Amen.

Brethren!

No doubt that, in your occasional readings of the Scriptures, you have met with single verses or even solitary expressions which appeared to you as containing an epitome of volumes of learning, and as opening up to you a wider field for contemplation and thought, than entire elaborate treatises, where the careful writers have striven to heap idea upon idea, and to convey by close and intense application the treasures of information which they have so laboriously gathered up in years of toil and research; and at a glimpse the truth you were seeking for was revealed to you in all her beauty and unadorned splendour; and when you had seen such a passage, you must have felt that in reality you had learned all that could reasonably be obtained, and that farther search was useless, and labour exerted in vain. You have felt like the traveller who is journeying to the far-famed palace of a mighty sovereign through long deserts, difficult mountain defiles, and impenetrable forests, when suddenly and unexpectedly to himself the royal residence bursts upon his enraptured view through a vista which opens to him the goal towards which he has been toiling; and though he be alone, with no one near to confirm his impressions, he feels the utmost conviction and the most positive assurance that no other than his revered sovereign could have

erected such a structure as the place of his habitation. Even so are the Scriptures in the sudden light which they throw upon matters in which the unaided mind has been toiling perhaps for years without success, without a single ray to illuminate the darkness in which all human reasoning, relying upon itself alone, must ever find itself involved during its search for truth. And should you have once felt the force of divine illumination, although unexpectedly brought home to your soul: it is utterly impossible that you can ever after lose totally sight thereof; but the conviction thus produced will be present to you, and give strength to your resolves and firmness to your hopes, which naught on earth can shake, provided only you choose to let the belief take root in your spirit, that it was indeed the teaching of God which instructed you, and you seek not for the vain-glorious distinction of having by your own fallible knowledge evolved the principles which you now feel to be based on truth.

One of those peculiarly animating verses of which I have been speaking occurs in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, and is in the following words:

וידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך כי ה׳ הוא האלהים
בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד : דבר׳ ד׳ לט׳ :

"Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal is the God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else." (Verse 39.)

Ay! there is none else! How does this single expression sweep away all idea of a divided power, of a multitude of persons in the Godhead; there is none else, says the text, in the heavens above and on the

earth beneath. Ascend in your imagination to heights which no human eye has ever reached; magnify the world above ever so much; view it filled with millions of suns and tens of millions of planets; people the whole with intelligent beings like yourselves, and scatter through the immensity of space angels of brightness, holy and pure, free from guile, exempt from sin; or look down deep into the bowels of the nether world, see it brimming full with heaving, burning fluid metal, or regard it as one vast reservoir of mighty waters; examine the birds as they float in air, whether it be the eagle who sweeps along on mighty pinions, the far-seeing condor who drops from the region of the clouds upon his prey in the depth of the valley, or the sweet nightingale pouring forth his enchanting song from the midst of the deep green foliage of spring, or the changeful humming-bird as he flits from flower to flower to drink in the honey from the open cups of nature's jewels; speak unto the beasts of the forests, whether they tower in mighty strength, like the bulky elephant, docile to his leader, but terrible to his foe; the tawny lion as he roars from his slaughter, the wily fox, or the spotted leopard; then regard the peaceful companions of man, the fleet dromedary that traverses for him deserts and plains, to carry his merchandise to distant lands; the horse that labours for him in the furrows of the field, the cow that supplies him with milk, the sheep that furnishes him with wool to cover himself withal in the rigorous season of winter; and view at length the fishes which sport in their own element; all, all endowed with those peculiar forces and habits by which they can sustain their existence till the day of their

change has come; nay even turn your gaze of inquiry upon the insect world, all curiously and wonderfully shaped in the endless variety in which they exist, whether it be the worm that crawls in the dust, or the gay butterfly which enlivens the landscape in the season of summer; look at all parts of the entire world,—and then you will still discover and feel the force of the truth of the Scripture, that the Eternal is the true God, the Creator who made all, and that there is no one who aided Him in elaborating the vast structure of which you are but a minute part, and that there is no god who shares with Him the rule in any part of Creation, be this over the matter which is visible to the eye and perceptible to the senses, or over the spirit, the invisible power by which the inert masses of matter are set in motion. —In nothing whatever can the other power, granted there be any, be discovered; whithersoever we journey, wheresoever we are, in whatever age we live, in whatever concern we busy ourselves, we meet with evidences of one vast system of design, of a uniformity of will, of a oneness of purpose, without an opposing force to retard, without an assistant to aid our God. And lest we might be misled by the discrepancies which daily occurrences present, through the insufficiency of our knowledge and experience, which, therefore, do not enable us to judge with certainty of every thing, to suppose that the different results which we witness are the productions of different and independent powers: the Bible comes to our aid, and tells us that we need not alarm ourselves because all the effects of actions around us are not such as we might perchance desire; there is, despite of the regret

we experience at results unpleasant to us, but one Cause from whom they all spring, that all is based on goodness, and all is led by mercy, and the whole of what strikes us either in our experience or that of others will to a surety tend at length to the happiness of all, though we ourselves cannot at present trace the connexions which will lead to such an ultimate result.

It is possible enough, as indeed it occurred in ages before this, that men might be induced to adopt the idea, that the source of good and evil is diverse, or in other words, that the results which we witness have different causes for their origin; and because men once commenced to look upon a diversity of results as proceeding from a diversity of principles, they came at length to the adoption of the absurd idea of investing every manifestation around them with an independency of being, and of ascribing divine honours to whatever they loved or feared, and to look with veneration upon every thing the origin of which they did not comprehend with sufficient accuracy. And having once commenced thus to multiply the objects of worship, it must have been impossible to limit their number within a reasonable compass; and though the first believers in a plurality in the Deity might have confined the ideas of worship to two, the origins of good and evil; or to three, the creative, sustaining, and destructive principles; or to the power over the sky, that over the earth, and the one over the sea,—or at length into whatever original form polytheism at first presented itself as the most reasonable to its first adherents: it must have soon been perceived that, whatever dogma was first adopted,

it failed to explain all the phenomena of outward nature which are perceptible to mankind; and hence a constant addition to the number of divinities became the prevailing folly, until a heathen could admit into his catalogue of worshipful beings the most contradictory, and those whose origin was the most diverse and uncongenial. It mattered not to him who invented a certain god and proclaimed his worship; it was nothing singular to him that rites the most barbarous and monstrous were demanded to appease the wrath of his own or others' absurdities: his Olympus was capacious enough to afford a suitable dwelling for all of them, and every new addition of inhabitants to the abode of the celestials only demanded of him the erection of a new temple at a place declared sacred to the respective deity, with perhaps an order of priests, sacrifices, and rites, in consonance with the peculiar influence which was ascribed to the same by the brutalized worshippers. And this was not the current belief of the ignorant only; but the wisest among the ancient nations readily acquiesced in all these absurdities; and the magnificent temples and statues, which have come down to our own age, only too well attest what wealth, and skill, and ingenuity were exhausted to adorn and dignify the follies which disfigured the face of the earth in those days, and they will ever continue to excite our wonder at the depth of debasement into which human reason could sink, when once it departed from the path of truth. Still when we duly reflect upon the downward tendency of all departures from the proper standard, at the impossibility of fixing a stopping-point, when once we are afloat on the ocean of conjecture and uncertainty:

we will cease to wonder at the greatness of the aberration of paganism, and return sincere thanks to the Creator, that He in mercy condescended to teach us himself something of his being, and to bring us near unto his service.

The miraculous descent on Sinai after our going forth from Egypt, on the day the recurrence of which we now celebrate, has often been dwelt upon; and in our imagination we yet can hear the thunders which shook the sacred mountain and made the people tremble; we yet behold the brilliant flames of fire which blazed upward to the heart of heaven; we can picture to us the millions who stood at the base of the chosen Horeb, eager to hear the voice of their King. It will therefore be well to question ourselves, Why all this was done? what matters it whether we believe in and follow one system or the other? is not the morality of the gentiles the same as that of the Jews? is not their idea of justice equal to our own? But we forget, if thus we argue, the origin of the morality and justice of the gentiles, and after all we exaggerate their value and extent, in our haste to undervalue our own. But first, as regards heathen ideas of right and wrong, we would be unwise to measure them by the standard which prevails at this day; if you examine history you will find how many things deemed now criminal and unlawful, in any code of laws now prevalent, were considered harmless and lawful; and systems which deified the evil, sacrificed to war, terror, and bloodshed; assigned divine honours to theft and the basest passions; which permitted temples to be built to heroes whose greatest merit it had been to immolate thousands upon the field of battle to pro-

mote their own ambitious purposes,*—I say, if these were the legitimate results of the most refined systems of pagans, the Chaldeans, Romans, and Greeks: what sort of morality, what sense of justice could prevail to any great extent; must not every sensuality, even the grossest, every violence, even the most cruel, have found more than a justification in the conduct and examples of their gods? And what debasement must have rested upon the minds of the unenlightened masses, when those in authority, and the teachers of the people excused crimes by such appeals? It is not necessary for us to go into an extensive and detailed examination of the question at issue; since the smallest practical acquaintance with history will more than bear out our inference. We therefore say, with the utmost sense of our dependence on Providence for all our blessings, and for none more than the gift of religion, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for his mercy, in having had respect to our humble state, and sent us redemption from the chains of tyranny and the trammels of unbelief." Yes, it was the manifestation of his mighty power by which we were released from thraldom; and it was likewise by the display of his omnipotence and wisdom that our spirit was freed from the bonds of superstition, and we received a law which teaches us to know what God is, and how we are to act in consonance with this high knowledge. It was the teaching of divine wisdom alone which tore from before our eyes the impenetrable veil of unbelief and falsehood, of that gross blindness which would not permit the wondrous

* So Virgil says of Augustus, "Deus nobis haec otia fecit." Ecl. i, 6.

works of God to appeal properly to our understanding, which shut out from our soul the Creator and his goodness, which made us adopt the vain imaginings of sinful man as reason, and follow his absurd perversion of truth and justice as the principles upon which to base our course of life. But it required all the training in Egypt and the desert which we received to make the divine truths acceptable unto us, to eradicate from our very being the pernicious errors which we had imbibed in our early infancy; and only after a pilgrimage of forty years through a land which has neither field-labour nor vintage, the residence of horrid monsters and poisonous serpents—a land where we obtained bread and water only through the special intervention of Providence, the great prophet could address us in the words of our text: "Know therefore this day and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal is the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, there is none else," referring to the preceding verse, which says: "Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know, that the Eternal is *the* God, there is none else beside him." (35.) Through the whole of the connexion of Moses with the Israelites, he tells them, they had discovered but one Agency; was it to afflict Pharaoh and his people with plagues, the Eternal alone was the efficient Power; if they referred to the passage of the Red Sea and its accompanying display of wonders, it was the same Hand that chastised and saved; and at the giving of the law, it was the word of the same God which taught them wisdom. In brief, the evils which befell themselves and those who rose up against them, and the blessing and mercy which they had so mani-

festly and often experienced, had all the same origin,—they sprung from the Creator of all, who endures for everlasting, who is not only eternal but is also one and alone, who is powerful to save, who blesses and no one can recall the word, who smites and no one can stay his outstretched arm. Observe well, that the prophet in the passage under discussion refers to the love which God bore to our fathers, wherefore and in order to observe the covenant which He had made with them, He had compassion on us when we were in affliction, and brought us unto his service by causing us to see his great fire on earth, and letting us hear his mighty voice in the announcement of his precepts. And in all this display of goodness and power there was no associate, no intermediate agent to effect the ends proposed; since Moses himself was merely the instrument for the conveyance of the deeds, and as respects the promulgation of the Decalogue not even he was deputed; for all the people themselves heard the words, *there was a voice audible to all, but no similitude or form was perceived* by more than six hundred thousand men of Israel who surrounded the Mount Sinai, besides their wives and children and the multitude of strangers among them. Indeed, from the call of Abraham to be a servant of God, down to the very moment at which Moses was delivering that sublime speech to the people, just before his death, there had not been felt, seen, or known any mediatorial personage who did or could aid the great Supreme in the execution of his will, or could thwart Him in his intention, or turn away his decrees of justice by any act of his own from the exposed head of guilty mortals.

Now the display of the glory of God on the great day of the first Pentecost, was not for the sake of merely astonishing the dwellers of the earth at the profusion of strength and power which are the Lord's; but to impress on the minds of the people of Israel that they were accountable only to the One Creator, who alone is God, and who therefore alone had the legitimate power and right to prescribe to them the deeds which they should accomplish, and the way in which they should go. In short, the Eternal One came to instruct, and while doing so, He naturally had to impress the minds of his elect with á conviction so strong, that they should be able to withstand all the powers of persuasion of worldliness and of fear in their intercourse with others not so instructed, and to remain faithful to the laws which they had received, though all others should continue to follow the base inclinations of sinful passions and the emanations of folly and unbelief. But as the Lord is not alone the God of Israel, since He is the Father of all mankind, He did not limit the exercise of mercy and justice to the Hebrews alone, but bade them to love the stranger, and to follow Him in his ways of providence wherewith He takes care of the helpless and dependent creatures, and provides them with their daily bread, and with raiment to protect them against the inclemency of the seasons. In addition to this He promised us as the greatest blessing, not triumph over our enemies, but a state of peace, in case we should truly observe his commandments; so that even victory and success in arms were not so great an evidence of his favour as that state of national quiet, when not a sword was seen in the land,

and each man pursued his field-labour or his other industrial engagements without fearing an enemy, or thinking to put on his armour to go beyond the borders of his land to molest others in their possessions. So then the revelation of Sinai was and is virtually a religion of peace and good-will towards all men, and a system of justice and charity towards every one, based upon the acknowledged sovereignty of the Great God who alone created, who solely governs the world, and loves all He has made.

In this manner is it clearly proved, that in every point of view it is of the utmost moment that we adhere to the Mosaic law, in contradistinction to the heathenish rites and beliefs of whatever sort, either those of ancient or modern times. And as respects the views of the followers of the Koran or the Gospels, whose morality approaches our own, we can dismiss them with one single remark: no new revelation was ever vouchsafed to these since God spoke to our fathers in the desert of Horeb, and they have therefore received no new light with regard to what the Lord requires of his creatures. And as respects a superior holiness inherent in any of them above what is with Israel, we have yet to learn that the idea of a mediatorial interference, in the one, and of a sensual felicity after death in the other, have rendered their followers more observant of justice towards each other, or ever sheathed the sword of persecution or the love of conquest towards others. More than eighteen hundred years ago it is alleged that a reign of peace has commenced on earth; we are told the lamb lies down with the wolf, and a young child can play upon the den of the cocatrice; but if we look

abroad in the actual world, we see evil, and hatred, and war, and injustice as yet holding rule on earth; and so far from its being true that the belief in a mediator tranquillizes the spirit and purifies the heart: the most monstrous absurdities and contradictory systems are constantly invented and propagated in the name of the same imaginary being. I am not saying this as an invective against non-Israelites, but to show in a few words, true in every particular, why we cannot become followers of the Mahomedan and Nazarene beliefs; why we stand to this day on the same platform on which we were placed more than three thousand years ago by the One who formed our body out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. He also breathed into us, on the day we now celebrate, a new spirit, even the law which He delivered into our charge; He incorporated it with our being, with our separate existence as a peculiar people, the descendants from a common origin; He placed us in the vanguard of those who profess to believe in his salvation: and should we turn traitors at this late day? forget his mercy? forget his truth? reject Him as our Sovereign? place near Him an associate, who exists not? call on a mediator who has not power to save?—Forbid it justice! forbid it gratitude! We are bound by a thousand ties of mercy to our great Father. He has said unto us, "And I severed you from the peoples to be mine;" and though we sin, though many of us may prove false on the day of trial: his word will not fail of its ultimate effect, and we shall be preserved; a remnant will escape, to tell to all generations that we know in our heart, with a thorough con-

viction, that the Lord, the Creator, the Eternal is the only God, the only Saviour, who reigns without associate in the highest heavens, and who is supreme on earth, without a mediator to perfect the work He has begun, and to bless with everlasting salvation those who obey his will, in the days that are coming as in those that are past; for which grace we will bless his Name, now and forever. Amen.

Sivan 5th. } 5607.
May 20th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF FAITH.

God of our fathers, almighty, merciful, and long-suffering, who rewardest in justice and recompensest with paternal indulgence! have regard unto thy people, the remnant of Israel, and deal with them according to thy wonted ways of mercy and truth. Look not unto the smallness of their merits, not to the sinfulness of their hearts; but according to thy abundant kindness and grace accept the humble offering of good deeds they may bring, and blot out their sins, though these cry out unto Thee for condign visitation on the guilty race. And let all mankind see in thy dealings towards us, that Thou art the same Thou wert from the beginning, great in deeds and wonderful in counsel; that even according to thy immeasurable greatness is the benignity which Thou spreadest

like a pavilion over the works of thy hands, that they may not perish utterly in the slough of their iniquity. And O! stretch forth thy hand to those who wait for thy salvation, and snatch them from destruction like a brand from the midst of the burning, and display the evidence of thy glorious Name over thy heritage, in order that all the ends of the earth may see thy salvation, O Lord our God! and join themselves unto the standard of thy law in meek acknowledgment of thy truth and love with which the world is governed. Amen.

Brethren!

The history of our people is full of instruction, and serves as a guide to point out the proper path on which we should go, and the deeds which we should avoid whenever they present themselves to us in the course of our earthly pilgrimage. "But," I hear some one say, "the same is the case with all other narratives of national events; for history is philosophy teaching by example." This certainly is true enough as regards political features, and violent changes in morals and government; for such as these strike the attention of the chroniclers, and they record them with all the details which can embellish them, and in a style the best calculated to interest the reader. But the silent working of principles, the mental struggle of the actors in the scenes sketched for us, are unknown to the general historian; and hence the most important events which we find recorded burst upon us in all the startling effect of suddenness; for we are not prepared, at least in most instances, to comprehend how they came upon the stage of life in the manner

they did. Though, therefore, we are presented with the fearful tragedies with which history is filled, and with the revolutions, the horrors of which are enough to make man blush for his species: they are not possessed of the character of examples to affect the life of the individual; they are truly national, and are only thus calculated to teach communities as such, not to govern the individual life of those who compose them. But the history of the Israelitish people, being traced by those who had a knowledge of the workings of the human heart, and wrote down the events which they record not to gratify curiosity, but to inform men of their moral obligations, presents us with the connexion of the thought with the deed which it prompted, and exhibits to us clearly how the wrong which is perpetrated by mankind, either in masses or singly, springs from a previous corruption of the healthy sentiment, which it is the province of religion to inculcate. So then it is in vain that you measure the importance of Jewish history with narratives of other nations, either ancient or modern; you need not look for a detailed account of mighty revolutions or the shocks of contending hosts; no doubt these did occur frequently in the course of our national existence; but they are not a necessary ingredient in the improvement of the spirit; and hence they are merely sketched, where their introduction was necessary, in the simplest and fewest words, merely to snatch them from oblivion; but beyond this they are neither dwelt upon nor exhibited in the vividness of profuse description, which profane historians are so sedulous to bestow on scenes of carnage and bloody encounters. The Jews had unquestionably their his-

torians and chroniclers, who noted down whatever of the striking or great their observation had taught or study had discovered; several such are indeed alluded to in Scripture. But the Bible itself must not be viewed merely in the light of a book of biographical story, of scientific discovery, and brave deeds in arms, although you discover traces of all this interwoven in its pages; on the contrary, it is professedly an exposition of duties, and the consequences resulting from their observance or neglect; and it presents us, on the one side, the perfect and happy man who fears the Lord, and the people who are mindful in their national affairs of their allegiance to Heaven: and on the other hand, we see individuals and nations going to their downfall, simply because they would not receive instruction, and not because they lacked wisdom, learning, bravery, and enterprise. Nay, the very reverse will be found the case. The shepherd Abraham, whose wisdom is not recorded in many a book of elegant verse and sublime prose, became the father of a great people, though he was a wanderer, as his descendants were to be, in a land not his by birth or inheritance: while the wise Solomon, whose beautiful thoughts and deep reflections were the theme of admiration of his age, and are a mine of knowledge at this very hour, in whose reign civilization and refinement obtained the highest elevation in Palestine, which then was more extensive in its boundaries than ever before or since, in whose days there was a universal peace throughout his dominions, could not succeed in securing the undisturbed possession of the government to his son, nor to stifle during his own reign the discontent existing in the minds of the

people by his administration. And when you come to examine why this was so? you will find the answer in the recorded characters of these two eminent men, sketched by a pen that wished not to flatter human weakness nor to accord a merit which was not deserved. In brief, Abraham was and remained the simple traveller from Chaldea amidst all his exaltation, and Solomon forgot the ways of David, his father, and permitted a foreign influence to corrupt his better judgment, and thus to destroy the foundation of his peaceful dominions.

Apply the same analysis to any and every portion of the biblical history, and you will discover the same object and course of the narrative; it is not to teach philosophy merely by example, but to inculcate the great lesson on which our religion is founded, "that only in a pious execution of all the prescribed duties which are within our reach, superinduced by the latent feeling of deep-seated faith and confidence in the teaching of God, can we attain to that point of excellence which is accessible to us, and the consequent real success in what is best for our permanent welfare." Anything short of this would be failing in the object of our creation; for we were made in the intelligent image of God, in the similitude of his divine spirit of wisdom; and therefore we can only then claim to be in a faint degree like our Father in heaven, when we have reached that point of perfection in intelligence and knowledge of God, which to attain is our appointed duty on earth. It is for this end that we have received the power of distinguishing between good and evil, that we have been blessed with a free choice, that we can regulate ourselves as

we please in a moral point of view; and that, finally, we shall be happy or otherwise, only in the measure that we have ourselves chosen wisely or unwisely; and that no outward aid can avail us in this enterprise for which we were created, if we neglect the inherent powers of the mind which have been bestowed on us as a special gift from the Creator. The history of Israel is therefore a mirror in which we all can see our own likeness foreshadowed, the odious features of our base desires, and their baleful consequences clearly portrayed; and this has been done, not to amuse us by curious developments of the history of the mind, but to enable us to call to our aid all the appliances for wisdom and self-government which have been bestowed on us in the divine law promulgated through the greatest of prophets, the meekest of men, who, basking in the light of divine effulgence, maintained a childlike simplicity, being always one of the people, rejoicing in his greatness only as it enabled him to lead wisely and faithfully the flock of the Lord intrusted to his charge from the time that he was destined to be their leader.

These preliminary reflections will perhaps account for the very remarkable fact that, in all the wanderings of the Israelites through the wilderness, we are only presented with a continued series of transgressions and punishments consequent thereon, and that at length we find the great leader himself ensnared in the decreed exclusion from the holy land, to see which he so ardently desired, but which wish was not accorded to him, because he had not duly sanctified the name of the Lord on the memorable occasion when the people thirsted for water in the arid plains

of the wilderness of Kadesh. Let no one imagine that during the forty years which the connexion of Moses with the sons of Israel lasted, there occurred so few opportunities for self-praise, or that there were no other than the few recorded instances when faith, charity, and liberality were displayed on the part of the people and their chiefs; all we can assume is, that only by tracing, as Moses did, the various exhibitions of the stubborn rebellion of the nation just released from slavery, and the visitations which succeeded so punctually on their various backslidings, could he impress in the strongest manner on their successors the absolute necessity of surrendering themselves entirely to the guidance of God, though this should apparently lead them through the most appalling dangers, secure in the conviction that the wisdom of the Lord will ask nothing of man which is beyond his power of accomplishing.

The Bible therefore is intended to teach us the great principle of FAITH, not that sort which demands a belief in certain incomprehensible dogmas for which credence is claimed as the price of salvation, but that perfect abandonment of our whole being to God's care, in the conviction that He desires our welfare only, and that his laws, when followed up closely and truly, will have the result of securing our best happiness both here and hereafter. But some one may ask me here: "Is this so great a thing? does not God give us whatever we possess? does He not bestow on us the very power of enjoying? are we not altogether his subjects over whom He can dispose at pleasure? where then is the merit of firmly believing that He wishes to make us happy? is not the

world full of beautiful things? are not everywhere objects which are providentially calculated to increase our enjoyment and consequent happiness? does not our whole existence, do not all circumstances around us, continually compel us to believe and trust in the all-wise and all-merciful Benefactor, who made and sustains us?" No one whose heart beats truly for his religion will in the least gainsay a word of this; God's munificence is indeed displayed everywhere, and we are constantly bidden to rise and to eat, equally with the renowned prophet Elijah, when he fled into the wilderness from fear of the threatened vengeance of the wicked Isebel. But for all this faith is not of that easy growth which some may imagine. Perhaps in the constant tide of success, when the herds and flocks multiply, and the substance is increased manifold; when the healthful bloom of robust youth glows on the cheek, and the world around smiles an approval on what we undertake, many a one may feel the sentiment that he has cause for thankfulness to his Maker who has so bountifully bestowed his goodness upon him, granted even that his pride does not substitute his own powers as the cause of his happiness. But where will be his faith when fortune vanishes? when health fades? when youth is fled? when the undeserved censure of the world pursues him with remorseless rancour? will he then see the blessing which others enjoy without envy, and their aggrandizement without repining? And yet God is the same in all instances; for when prosperity is his, others have to endure the common lot of humanity, the changes, the vicissitudes, the disappointments which accompany us through life; and if in his dis-

tress he justly despairs or doubts of the divine mercy, others are just as much empowered to indulge in this sinful feeling when he is prosperous. The faith of which we speak is, therefore, though the great requisite of a religious life, precisely that peculiar quality of the mind which is the fitting problem of the greatest prophet to solve, although it is equally demanded of the humblest follower of the Lord. It must accordingly be impressed in early childhood that it is the same Goodness which directs the stars, and causes the grass to grow from the field, which supplies the power to the planets to pursue their prescribed course, and produces the seed for the seedman, and food for him who needs food. When we grow up and begin to appreciate the diversities of position, of wealth, and mental endowments among mankind: we ought to be taught that it is not the precise amount which each one receives which constitutes his happiness, but that it is to be found in the correct appropriation of the gifts of Heaven. When we have attained to mature years, and we find ourselves jostled by the eager crowd who with us hasten forward in the race for preferment and greatness, and we see ourselves postponed for those whom we think less deserving than we are: we ought to tell ourselves sincerely that our failure, even when not ascribable to any want of care on our part, must have been the best for our ultimate good; for otherwise the Lord would have aided us in the accomplishment of our wishes. When at length we have lived to old age, and have seen one by one our dearest friends sink into the grave, our fondest expectations changed into bitter disappointment, and we stand

lone and forsaken on the verge of eternity: even then we should know that our Redeemer liveth, and that it was his hand which has guided us from our first being until the day we see the sepulchre standing open at our feet. And only when we never waver in our trust, when we feel the same confidence in our God amidst all the circumstances of our life; if we faint not when surrounded by sorrows, nor become elated by success which it was not our privilege to obtain through our own unaided agency, whereas presumption so often ascribes all prosperity to its own exertion: can we say that we have acquired due faith in the Lord, that we have believed in Him as Abraham believed, who acknowledged the truth of God's promises of a numerous progeny, though already more than eighty times had he seen the seasons renewed whilst he remained childless; and who again was ready and willing, but O! with what depth of grief filling his soul, to sacrifice the very child of promise, when told that this the only son of his long-loved Sarah was needed as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains, which should be shown unto him. And is this so easy a task, do you think, to accomplish? are you all here willing so to believe? so to obey? If this be actually the case, then can you say your faith is perfect; but, if not, if there be lurking in your heart one doubt of God's truth, the slightest hesitation in following Him for life or for death; if you have any possession which you cannot sacrifice to his service: then be sure the task which your Creator has laid upon you is not accomplished; the lesson you have received may be slightly impressed on your mind, but it is not indelibly fixed, and your religion

is not safe against the attacks of temptation, let this come in the accumulating tide of prosperity, or the downward flow of distress and sorrow; in the one case you would perhaps forget the Power that has blessed your labour, and in the other you would needs murmur against the all-just Judge who metes out to you the recompense of your misdeeds.

Now, it was precisely this want of faith, the doubting of Providence, which characterized our ancestors during their sojourn in the wilderness, especially in the first years after their departure from Egypt.—Whilst yet in bondage they had been promised the possession of the goodly land on both sides of the Jordan, the same which God had given to their fathers, with the assurance that it should be possessed by their descendants after their deliverance from the land of their servitude. Four hundred years from the commencement of Abraham's wanderings had been accomplished, when the promise made to him was so far fulfilled that the shackles of Egypt's bondage were removed from their limbs, and they had stood redeemed and untrammelled at the foot of Horeb, and had of a free accord accepted the Revelation of God, and entered without compulsion into an everlasting covenant with the Author of the universe. More than their imagination had ever conceived, they had experienced; what no human eye had ever before seen, they had witnessed; what no ear had ever listened to they had themselves heard; but we will not enumerate all the miracles, for they are only subordinate to the great truth they had received, that their God was all-powerful, superior in wisdom, unequalled in deed, and ready to hear the petition of the needy.

Why then would they not confide? why did they not believe that He meant to act a father's part with them? But again and again they rebelled, and when they accordingly arrived at the confines of the land whither they were journeying, they hesitated to enter, before they had made a proper reconnoissance of its position, the strength of its cities, the fruitfulness of its fields, and the military prowess of its inhabitants. But as the Lord always employs human agency, although ever so inadequate, to effect his purposes, He did not forbid the sending forth of the twelve spies to search out the land. But however unfavourable the report should have been, it was the duty of the people to go forward under the direction of their well-tried leader, in the full conviction of finding the land suitable for their dwelling, and of ample success in capturing it; inasmuch as the Lord had promised them a victory over their opponents, and they had had already such ample testimony both of his power to accomplish his will, and of His truth to fulfil all that He promises. But no! the messengers spoke of the great danger to be encountered by the unhealthiness of the climate of Palestine, the powerful state of its natural and artificial defences, and the extreme stature of its inhabitants. Its fruitfulness they did not deny; but the very gigantic size of the fruit which they bore along with them to the camp gave some well-founded colouring to their artful calumny, regarding the gigantic stature of the warlike inhabitants so like the vegetable productions of the land, but calumny only in their exaggerating the existing dangers, and not heeding what Joshua and Caleb so well enforced: "Whilst the Lord is with us, you

need not fear them." How ungrateful, how thoroughly imbued with a slavish spirit did the Israelites prove themselves to be at that time; the blows of their taskmasters were barely as yet healed, when they consulted together in order to appoint a chief to return with him to Egypt; freedom was nothing, God's favour unheeded, provided they could drag out a miserable existence without being compelled to face actual danger, which they had been assured should vanish, provided only they would advance boldly, trusting in the Being who had benefitted them already in so many and wonderful ways. Need we then wonder that the most condign punishments were decreed against the unbelieving generation? It was therefore from no undeserved severity that the Lord spoke to Moses:

עד אנה ינאצני העם הזה ועד אנה לא יאמינו בי בכל האתות אשר עשיתי בקרבו : במדבר יד' יא' :

"How long will this people incense me, and how long will they not believe in me, despite of all the signs which I have done in the midst of them?" Numb. xiv. 11.

Instruction had failed to impress them; forgiveness for the making of the golden calf had not left a conviction of their unworthiness; the death of the dissatisfied longers for meat had also passed unheeded: what more could be done to correct the propensity to follow in the senseless superstitions of the worshippers of stocks and stones? Nothing less than the death of that whole generation; and so then it was decreed that of the six hundred thousand and up-

wards of the men over twenty years old at that time, but two, the faithful Caleb and Joshua, should survive to enter the holy land, so that the children might be taught, during a weary pilgrimage through the desert of forty years, that the only way to deserve the divine favour is to have the fullest confidence in the Lord's justice and truth.

The dreadful decree was announced to the people, and that no repentance could revoke what was inviolably to happen, and they were soon convinced that it was their duty to submit patiently to the will of offended Justice. Still the death of that generation did not take place suddenly; but as the various kinds of corn and fruit are gathered in, each one in its season, while their seed is left to reproduce their like again in another season: so were the fathers of Israel removed one by one, during a period of thirty-eight years, so that the nation remained undiminished, save by a very small number, when a second numbering took place in the fields of Moäb by the Jordan opposite Jericho, just before the prophet was to lay down his authority, and transfer it into the hands of his trusty follower Joshua the son of Nun. It was thus that Justice sent retribution; but Mercy wielded the sword, and sent healing with every wound that was inflicted. Those who lacked faith, who being faint-hearted under adverse circumstances would probably have grown outrageously wicked under success, were removed out of the way, not to be a stumbling-block to those who were to continue the household of Israel; and these were all along trained under the immediate superintendence of Providence, as we may freely term it, since they knew of no enjoyment which did not

come to them more immediately from a supernatural Source, than was ever the case with any other people that had existed since the creation of the world. And when the time of probation came, when numerous well-appointed armies met them on the field of battle, they were ready to obey the call of duty, and they did not turn the back on the day of strife.

Brethren! the eventful history of the exploration of Palestine proves to us how abhorrent is in the eyes of God that faintheartedness which has its birth in a want of a firm trust in his goodness and truth. Unfortunately for us, modern times have witnessed an analogous dereliction; men have begun to doubt of the permanence of the obligation which religion demands of them. Will they who neglect their duties ultimately prosper? will not the broken covenant claim its victims as in olden days? Let those, then, who have the fear of God in their heart flee from sin whilst yet it is time; let them arm themselves with faith to resist the temptation with which a new state of circumstances surrounds them; and let them then turn a deaf ear to all the allurements which a newly engendered love for gentile customs addresses to them. If our fathers were unwise to desire a return to Egypt, equally foolish is it in us to seek an assimilation to those who not long since persecuted us even unto death. All foreign alliance is fatal to Israel, all desire for it is a betrayal of faith in the Lord. So let us stand by the law which was given to us, heedless of the attempts to rob us of our heritage, mindful in our present state of peace of how much we risked and braved to preserve it in days which tried the constancy of our souls. So will the Lord be with us in

all our doings, and will accept our service as pure incense on his altar. Amen.

Sivan 27th. } 5607.
June 11th. }

DISCOURSE VIII.

CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT.*

BRETHREN!

Yesterday you were assembled here to listen to the voice of psalmody and thanksgiving, inasmuch as you had been spared to see the completion of your ardent hopes; and now the house dedicated to the Holy One of Israel stands finished, and within the veiled ark rests the book of the covenant of your God, yea, *your* God, who by his great power purchased unto himself your forefathers out of the bondage of Egypt, that they might be unto Him a people of his heritage, as it is this day. Well might a heathen prophet, at seeing the far-outspreading camp of Israel, say (Numbers xxiv. 5):

מה טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתיך ישראל :

במדבר כר' ה' :

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! thy dwelling-places, O Israel!"

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* Delivered at the Synagogue Shaaray Tefillah (Gates of Prayer), of New York, on Sabbath Balak, the day subsequent to its dedication.

And well may we repeat the same beautiful exclamation, with all the fervour of awakened piety, when, after a short absence or a long separation, we enter again the abodes sacred to the name of the Lord, erected by the sons of Israel in the various places of their dispersion, where the iron hand of power is not laid on them to prevent their honouring their Father by dedicating houses devoted to his worship. Beautiful indeed are those tents,—those temporary structures where the sons of Jacob worship; they speak a language which all the world may understand; they proclaim, in a voice louder than that of the brazen trumpet, that our brothers, let them come from the East or the West, the North or the South, still cling to the ancient faith which was confided unto them; that they are true and steadfast, and are not counted among the nations; that they know of no *law* beyond the one proclaimed through Moses; that they fear no *God*, except the Holy One who first called Abraham to his service, and made afterwards his will known to his chosen servants. And ye have been strengthened in the Lord; ye have accomplished what you had resolved on, to dedicate to Him a sanctuary, where He might come to dwell among you; and therefore those who see you here assembled may fittingly address you in the words of the holy bard: "Blessed be ye who come in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord;" we wish you success in the good work that has been accomplished, we wish you success in all the good works you may purpose yet to do,—till the evident satisfaction of the Most High may be manifested over you, and the labours of your hands stand firm and established

through his favour. Do you ask for higher reward? Surely not: there is nothing exceeding it. The peace within, which the grace of God produces, the holy satisfaction which is felt over every duty accomplished, is surely a higher recompense than mere power over others enjoyed by the proud, or a mortal's praise proceeding from insincere lips, or monuments erected to grudgingly-acknowledged merit out of perishable materials, which, daringly called indestructible, barely survive a single night when assailed by the storms of heaven. And then, when God is with you, if you have acted so that He can approve, how prosperously will all your good intentions meet their accomplishment! Religion will flourish in your midst, and though even worldly wealth and success may be denied for the wisest of purposes, the humble life which you are destined to lead will be full of those heavenly joys, the foretastes of a blessed hereafter, which no king on his throne can experience, unless he feel the same humility before God, which your faith demands of the lowliest among you.

Let us now endeavour to trace out some of the ideas which are included in the main one of dedicating a synagogue to divine service. The first which will strike you is the principle of union which is required before even a single stone can be laid. One individual cannot build a house of prayer, unless he be gifted with immense wealth; and even if such a one be found,—one who is willing to spend his means liberally for this holy purpose,—it is still questionable whether, under all circumstances, it would be advisable for a community to permit his doing so. But generally speaking, at all events, it is necessary that

many men combine with a settled purpose for the sake of collecting funds, and properly expending them in order to build the house of God. One may give much, the other may give little, each according as his means suffice, or as his liberality impels him; and when thus the expenses are secured, there must be a plan for building devised, materials must be procured, labourers engaged; and only when all these have wrought for one well-defined purpose, when one mind has directed all their efforts, can the well-finished enterprise be discovered in the beautiful proportions which now greet the eyes of the beholder, and the structure be ready to receive the worshippers, anxious to enter its portals for prayer and humiliation before God. Union alone can perfect the thought which at first was merely an undefined idea, perhaps, in the mind of the originator; and only by following it out in all the various branches needed in the undertaking can success crown the fond expectations of the pious servants of the Most High, when desiring to erect unto Him a sanctuary, whence instruction and consolation may flow unto those who confide in his mercy.

The second idea embraced in the work is PEACE,—that sentiment of good-will towards each other which hallows every work, which renders all the blessings of life more instinct with heavenly light. If a union of purpose in planning, arranging, and erecting the outward sanctuary be absolutely requisite before the building can be completed: there is no less demanded a mutual bearing and forbearing with one another's foibles and offences, and a mutual concession of views in the government of the public affairs. Every one

cannot be right, nor is it likely that every one is altogether in the wrong in any proposition he may make. The only method of proceeding is to ascertain the opinion which is favoured by the majority; and though those composing the minority have an undoubted right to complain, and to endeavour by all peaceful and proper means to induce a sufficient number of those opposed to them to embrace their opinions, so that they in their turn may become the majority: they have, till this be effected, no right whatever to take exceptions to the views which have been adopted as the rules of the congregation, but they are bound to abide by and to uphold them in all their vigour, as though they had not only approved, but had actually originated them. Whatever has been resolved on is for the time being the law of the congregation, and, as such, it demands the acquiescence of all the members, and they should accordingly never threaten a withdrawal from the general body, or put obstacles in the way of the proceedings from the mere impulse of offended vanity, because at a particular meeting the measures proposed by others were adopted, whilst those they offered were rejected.

There can be no question on the other side, that a majority should not rule with a high hand; *that it is wrong for a number to combine before proper deliberation to carry a measure at all hazards*, be it acceptable to many others or not. The rule is, that a majority of one is as good as one of a hundred; but it is surely unwise for a bare plurality of voters to force their perhaps crudely-digested plans upon their associates, though these have good reasons, in all likelihood, for their dissent. Power is one thing, propriety and

right quite another. As said, the minority must, and, for that matter, should quietly submit to resolves lawfully arrived at, when an opportunity has been given to hear the dissent freely stated and fairly canvassed. At the same time, those who have the power ought to endeavour to conciliate all sides, and never attempt to govern a congregation by PARTY. As soon as this is done, then farewell to all love, to all union, to all peace. We should meet as brothers, all having one uniform end in view,—the promotion of godliness, the spread of the divine kingdom, the sanctification of every son of Israel, in and through the law and commandments revealed to us through Moses and the prophets; and whatever tends best to promote these ends is alone to be followed out in our congregational transactions. No one should presume to be better than his neighbour; and if he be richer, wiser, or more respected, that is something for him to be grateful for; but it is no reason why he should look with disdain upon one less favoured. He may argue, he may plead with his fellow-men to forego their prejudices, and to join him in views which he deems honestly to be better in their tendency. But never let him use threats, violence, or unlawful combinations; never let him, for the sake of carrying a favourite measure, close his ears to appeals not to proceed hastily and without sufficient cause. Something really good can wait a little postponement; a useful measure of reform will ultimately be carried, despite of some temporary delay; and, though we all may individually regret the slow progress certain wholesome measures make, notwithstanding our efforts to induce the public to adopt them, we ought neither to

urge them forward prematurely, nor to be angry with others for not adopting them at once; nor, on the other hand, ought we to relinquish them because of our first disappointment; but we should bear with patience the ill-success of our endeavours, and try to seek a more fitting opportunity of inducing a public acceptance.

One of the greatest trials of those who have the management of our congregations does consist in the perversity of many of the members, who, always dissatisfied with any measure which they have not themselves proposed, endeavour to create disturbance and dissatisfaction in others, who, but for their animadversions, would have passed the matter over in silence, and, perhaps, without feeling anywise aggrieved by the same. It is perhaps difficult to deal with such as these, either through means of persuasion or by passing by their machinations with silent neglect; they are in all likelihood too obstinate to understand forbearance, and too restless to permit silent disregard to put a permanent check on them. But even with these there is no occasion to proceed to the extent of open hostility. Conciliate them, brethren, if such are among you, which I hope, however, may never be the case. If there are any grounds for complaint which they can justly urge, endeavour to redress them in time; remove every species of burden which may lie heavily on those whose means may be circumscribed, and never let a brilliant scheme of any sort induce you to rush hastily upon expenditures which the public resources cannot easily defray. Give, in short, no cause for fault-finding to the vast majority, who are always rightly-thinking people, though once

in a while they may be misled by demagogical would-be leaders; and, if you do this faithfully לשם שמים, you need never fear the restless beings under discussion, who are unfortunately to be found in every community, from the few members of a household to those who compose the masses of a mighty empire. But if your object is to carry your measures with the high hand of authority; if you forget that you are stewards merely, appointed over the house of God for the general good, and that only by promoting this you can really be benefitted yourselves; if you imagine that the confidence of your brothers, which has raised you to dignity, places you at once far above their cognizance, and your acts beyond the range of their scrutiny: then know that you are unfaithful servants, they who "do the work of Heaven slothfully," and no good can result from your measures, and no respect can attach to you because of your office; nothing but evil can spring from your administration, and the sooner then you quit your station, the better for the public good, the better for yourselves, unless you will brave the wrath of God, who, whilst watching over the great concerns of mankind, does not pass by unnoticed the affairs of each and every community of Israelites in all their dispersions. It should be your serious endeavour to follow the advice of one of our ancient doctors of the Mishnah, who says: וכל העוסקים עם הצבור יהיו עוסקים עמהם לשם שמים "And all who are busied for the congregation should busy themselves with them for the name of Heaven," by which expression our Rabbins always meant to convey a pure disinterested act, performed as a duty which we owe to God, and for the faithful

performance of which we are directly responsible to Him who knows the actions and motives of man, and is always ready to punish or reward just as our conduct may deserve.

It is accordingly not the office which the public administrators should desire, but the benefit of the people; and hence, if they find that they cannot carry the measures which they believe necessary and useful without exciting more than a passing discontent, if they have just cause to expect virulent opposition and personal enmity to spring from their proposed line of conduct: they ought to transfer back their authority to those from whom they have received it, so that no act of theirs may give cause for enmity or controversy in the councils of their constituents. There is more dignity acquired in thus relinquishing a post which has lost its power of effecting good, than, by triumphing over opponents, run the risk of estranging the good wishes of many. If the people prefer your administration to that of any other party which they could select, they can easily express this preference by calling you again to the places which you have voluntarily vacated; so that on no possible ground of true expediency can you ever be justified to urge forward hastily any measures of doubtful propriety. On the other hand, as said before, the individual members of the congregation have no right whatsoever to expect that the directors shall yield to every whim or fancy of theirs; to postpone acts for the public good simply because they do not like, or because they have not originated them. Nor have they any just reason to withdraw from public meetings because men obnoxious to them have been elected

to office, or because, despite of their opposition, a resolve has been adopted against the sanction of which they have earnestly laboured. There is, it is true, a limit to this; for if the acts of the public bodies should unfortunately be such that conscientious scruples are involved in yielding thereto: then opposition will be a duty; and if this should prove of no avail, then a temporary withdrawal may become excusable or even necessary. But where mere expediency or a difference about electing one or the other person is concerned, there is no question but that a cheerful acquiescence in the action of the public becomes the bounden and sacred duty of every individual member.

It is only by such a mutual concession that peace in any community can be preserved, and useless contention be avoided. It is only thus that men can meet and concert measures for their own and the public welfare; for then those whom the Lord has blessed with wisdom can step forward to counsel in any matter in which deliberation is requisite; for then only can those who have wealth contribute the requisite materials, knowing that they will be well and wisely applied; and those who are intrusted with the execution of any scheme can proceed cheerfully with the work, because they are confident that they will meet with encouragement and approbation from the public voice, and be aided by all when assistance should become necessary. It is only when union and peace reign among us that we can hope to see education flourish in our midst; since, to effect this, counsel, pecuniary means, and an upholding of the rules to be adopted, are required to enable us to progress with the good work of refining the intellect,

diffusing knowledge, and implanting religious information among infants and adults. And by this means solely can we combat the injurious effects of the so-called *spirit of the age*, which has already attempted, and threatens to do yet more so, to rob us of our religion, by weakening our faith in its tenets and by abridging the range of observance. For our children must be taught to know the ways of their God, and to have a clear understanding of the scope and tendency of his precepts, before they can withstand the arguments of sophistry and a pretended wisdom, which is based solely upon denying all that is ancient, which would subject everything to the caprice of fashion and change, even the unchangeable and the eternal Word of our heavenly Father.

It is only through union and peace that the friendly relation of man to his neighbour, as enjoined in the law, can be maintained; because then only do we behold a friend and brother in all mankind; then we see the poor only to aid him; we behold the naked only to cover his shivering limbs; we perceive the mourner solely to bring comfort to his aching spirit; the bondsman's chains appeal to us to relieve his limbs from their burden; and even the sinner claims at our hands that we share with him the bread of life,—even the knowledge of the mercy and truth of God which dwells within those who have been faithful to the obligations of religion. Whereas disunion and enmity estrange brother from brother, arm the daughter against the mother, and produce contention between the husband and the wife of his bosom; and where this state of things prevails, no charity, no philanthropy, no compassion for the sorrows of each

other, no sympathy with the degraded state of our fellows, can find a place in our breast, and religion languishes, and humanity weeps, because the foundations on which they rest have been pulled down by the greatest enemies which our mental peace can know. Well therefore said our wise men: "The Lord could not find any vessel containing so much blessing as peace; wherefore the Psalm affirms, The Lord would give strength to his people, He therefore blesseth his people with peace." These are the words of the sages and teachers of Israel, based upon the superior wisdom of the records of revelation; and it is well for you, brethren, at the present moment when, through union and liberal expenditure, you have erected this house of prayer to the name of the God of Israel, and have assembled here to lift up your voices in praise and prayer before his awful presence, to reflect deeply upon the work you have done, and to strive that the great blessing of peace may not be banished from you through any fault of yours; that no act of oppression or of injustice may drive the humblest strangers from the portals of this house. And unite hand and heart, counsel and action, that nothing but brotherly union and a peace founded on the fear of God may reside within these walls: so that all who come hither to worship, whether they be residents of this town or strangers from a distant land, whether they be sons of Israel or those who are not of Jacob's descendants, may exclaim, in the words of the sweet singer of our own God-favoured race, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" seeing that you are

brothers in faith, and united by the bonds of peace, concord, and union.

Another idea which is connected with the erection by Israelites of a synagogue is that of godliness. It is not for the sake of ostentation that we are to build houses of prayer; not that we may be equal to our gentile neighbours in the possession of handsome meeting-places; but that we may be enabled to assemble on a spot especially dedicated to the Redeemer of our fathers, there to pour forth our orisons, and there to be strengthened in faith and obedience. We wish to meet there with our fellows in belief and hope; we wish to be animated by their example, and humbly to endeavour to influence them in return by our own words and deeds. We wish to meet with those worthy to be called Israelites, and we trust fervently that our joining ourselves with them may contribute in a measure to render us acceptable to the Deity. But how can we accomplish this acceptability? Is it merely by appearing here or elsewhere at stated periods to be seen of men, and to exhibit ostentatiously our festive garments, our costly jewels, or at best our public liberality? Are we to come before God in the pride of external trappings, of whatever kind they may be, it matters not which, and then say that we have done enough, when we have erected to Him a handsome house? when we have appeared there becoming our station in life? when we have there distributed of our wealth for the public good? Perhaps there may be many who deem that by acts like these they have done all that is demanded of them. But if thus any one of you reasons, he mistakes the truth; he is lamentably deficient in all that

which God requires of him before he can be received in favour. No objection can be made to our coming in an outwardly becoming manner when we assemble for prayer; but the inward beauty of holiness must not be wanting to falsify the handsome exterior. No one must come to show himself among the faithful, whilst he neglects the precepts of the law; it is not religion to be a constant attendant at prayers on the Sabbath, only to quit this house to attend to secular affairs, to business or amusements; to be devout at synagogue, whilst at home you devour forbidden food, or neglect to train your children in the pleasant, peaceful paths of your faith; for such hypocrisy would only expose you to the vengeance of the God who hates falsehood, and who does not tolerate ostentatious sacrifices accompanied by iniquity.

Your meeting here is in fact declaring that you acknowledge yourselves servants of the Lord; you assemble here to present yourselves to the King of the universe, the Master of your life, the Creator of your spirit. Serve Him then in singleness of heart, in purity of soul, in devoted faith, in meek submission. Go to the synagogue to pray and to meditate, and issue thence improved in your sentiments, and add the grace of private conformity to public adoration. Every deed thus performed will tend to improve your spirit, and render the next step in piety easier and more pleasant. And when the house of God thus tends to incite one by the example of the other, if the prayer offered up in the community of the faithful enters deeply into the whole being of the worshipper, if the law proclaimed in the hearing of all finds a response in the willingness of the awakened

conscience, and when all present resolve to be faithful to all which the Lord asks of them: then can you truly affirm that godliness has sprung from your dedicating a dwelling-place unto the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; his spirit will mingle itself in your assemblies, and the peace of Heaven will invigorate your souls, and union and harmony will strongly bind brother to brother, and conduce to render the perilous journey of life more pleasant and less arduous than otherwise it would be, seeing that the helping hand is held out to the needy, the foolish are instructed in the way of salvation, and the tear of anguish is dried up by the holy words of consolation. And should this result be found among you, beloved brothers in the Lord! through this house, which will henceforward stand open to the descendants of Jacob as the Gates of Prayer, whence their orisons may ascend heavenward unto the throne of grace and mercy: well may you say, in the fulness of gratitude and devotion when you enter here, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! thy dwelling-places, O Israel!" seeing that naught but truth, union, peace, and godliness are the emblems for life of those who have, by erecting this structure, avouched themselves as servants of the Most High God, the Creator and Redeemer of Israel, who in his own good time will fulfil his promise of salvation unto his people, and prove before the eyes of all nations that He alone sanctifies Israel, when He will establish his sanctuary in the midst of them forever; on that glorious day when the captives will be gathered unto Zion, and the Messiah, the prince of peace, will rule on earth in equity and justice, over-

shadowed by the power of the Lord, and upheld by his mercy. Amen.

And now, O Lord our God! who hast so miraculously dealt with thy people, whose goodness is displayed over all creation, as our eyes behold this day, we beseech Thee to have regard to these thy servants who are gathered this day in the new habitation which has been erected unto thy pure and holy worship, where they of the seed of Israel may resort, to offer up unto Thee prayer without guile, and praise without a deceitful tongue. O! how great is the thought, that mortal man is permitted by thy own expressed will to build a house for the dwelling of thy spirit! behold, the whole world cannot embrace thy essence, and yet Thou willest to dwell in a sanctuary, the work of the hands of man; for even according to thy unending greatness is thy miraculous condescension. But Thou, Holiest, Purest! demandest a sanctifying spirit, in order that man himself may hallow his labour to make it acceptable unto Thee. Aid us, then, O Father! in our struggle with our sinful nature; come and dwell within our heart that, assisted by thy undeserved grace, we may progress in sanctification, and become indeed of those who are fed by thy dainties, the pure light of truth, which illuminates the souls of thy saints, of those who walk with Thee, whose sins are forgiven, and whose works ascend up to Thee as an agreeable savour upon the great altar of the universe, where from every creature there arises the unanimous exclamation giving assent to its belief in thy existence, inasmuch as every being, in

all parts of imaginable extent, confesses itself to have sprung from thy potent word, which called forth the world from the depth of the fearful darkness of non-existence. And, O Source of eternal light! accept the humble deeds which we can offer! look not to our transgression, but, according to thy mercy, forgive where thy justice condemns. Free us also from the ills which beset our path during our pilgrimage, and give to each of us his daily bread, and endow all with wisdom to understand the pure truth of thy holy law; so that, understanding our responsibility, we may subdue the stubbornness of our heart of stone, and walk before Thee in the humility proper to fallen, sinful man. And upon this house shed thy blessing! let much peace dwell therein, and may it prove indeed a minor sanctuary, whence may issue much knowledge and consolation to those who confide in Thee and hope to see thy glorious return to Zion, the city of our desire, the home of our scattered tribes, where they are to dwell and never be plucked again from their inheritance. But not for our sake, O Lord! but unto thy own Name give glory, lest the gentiles say, "Where now is their God?" whereas Thou art indeed the God of our fathers, in whom we alone will trust, the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel, to whose name be praise and glory, from all flesh and spirit, even from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, from the beginning of the world to its ending, in heaven and on earth, now and forever. Amen.

Tamuz 11th.
June 25th. } 5607.

DISCOURSE IX.

DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY.

O God of Israel! we acknowledge before Thee thy unending truth and kindness which Thou hast shown to our fathers and to us their descendants; inasmuch as Thou didst bring us near unto thy service, and establish thy kingdom in the midst of our hearts by imparting to us the knowledge of thy ways and of the deeds we should do. But wo unto us! that we would not hearken, and that we entered the path of iniquity which ends only in destruction; and we acknowledge therefore that in righteousness were thy judgments sent, and that we merited all the evils which overwhelmed us in our own land and since our general dispersion among the nation. But even in thy indignation we have had the manifest evidence of thy truth; and the storm of adversity passed over without consuming us; for thy glory was in the blast, and it purified whilst it prostrated; and we, unworthy though we be in thy sight, have not ceased to exist, but are left to experience yet longer thy protection and thy chastisement, to be forever thy witnesses, even unto the day of the gathering of all nations in the valley of judgment, when Thou wilt show to all who is holy, and bring near unto thyself those Thou hast chosen, by the signs and wonders which Thou alone canst display, and set them up as a light to the

nations, that these too may come and seek thy service in truth and singleness of faith. Amen.

Brethren!

If the object of the Creator is benevolence, and a single unbiassed look at every thing around us sufficiently establishes this, the bestowal of religion could not have originated from any other than this motive. Whoever then regards it as an unnecessary restriction placed upon his natural liberty, as a useless restraint which interferes unpleasantly with his prerogative as a free agent, has certainly not arrived at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to his own position in reference to society, nor as respects the fact that he is himself an emanation from the Creator. Unrestrained liberty would presuppose that we owed nothing to any one beyond ourselves; and if we then wish to exercise this when we are about to act, we must in return expect the same exhibition of freedom from others to us, if they have to do anything which may affect us in a great or small degree. Absolute freedom of action also requires a state of irresponsibility, an autocratic exercise of all our faculties; and still where is the man who can say of himself, that he owes allegiance nowhere? and again, if allegiance is due to any one in the smallest conceivable degree, then is unrestrained will a thing not to be thought of. Men in an humble sphere of life, those for instance who work by the day for others in return for a small pittance which supplies them with scanty drink and limited food, may in their bitterness of incessant toil imagine that the masters of their labour must be happy, since they can control all with their wealth and

through their standing in the community; but in good truth are they not depending on their hirelings for the work these perform for them? Even assume that a pure spirit of benevolence actuates them in employing many in order to supply them in an honourable manner with the things they need: still are they beholden to them or to others not so immediately depending upon them for the production of the bread they eat, and for the garments which they wear, for the houses in which they live, for the water even which they drink, nay for the very means by which they can obtain so simple a thing as a common rush-light placed in a mean earthen vessel; since no one is able to provide himself by his own unaided labour with the necessaries of life except in a very limited degree, and then at the expense of such toil and time, that existence must lose all charm and pleasure. We will not in this connexion look upon man as depending on a Supreme Being, my intention being to exhibit the necessity of duty from a reference to man as surrounded simply by those of a similar nature to himself. So soon, therefore, as he steps from beyond the limits of isolation and enters into society, let the relation be what it may, as a subject or a ruler, as a child or parent, as a scholar or teacher, as a labourer or master, he ceases from that moment to have a natural right to the uncontrolled exercise of his will, so soon as this can come into collision with the wishes or convenience of others; and this must be so in every imaginable organization, and in every state, of society. This means simply that we have reciprocal duties to perform; and with this admission we acknowledge that we cannot be left to the uncontrolled

exercise of our own will and pleasure, the very term duty, or indebtedness, being in opposition to unrestricted license. If men were even then, at this moment, to find themselves in a state of nature, entirely uncontrolled by laws, untrammelled by any moral or religious restrictions: they would soon ascertain that this condition of things could not last, if they wished for the least security, or for the smallest share of domestic enjoyment. I need not paint to you the evils which would follow upon a state of perfect anarchy in this very community; each one of you can well imagine the state of horror where our weakness would expose us to assault of the violent, and the strong man would be compelled on his part to unsheath the sword in order to move along unmolested and to ward off constant danger. Mankind would soon vanish, at least all refinement and elegance would necessarily perish, if society were to be disorganized upon the basis that might made right. Even those of a strong hand and hasty impulses, whose greatest delight it seems to be to bear rule over the weaker or more yielding, would speedily discover that they would necessarily become exposed amidst such confusion to the violence of those more cunning and energetic than themselves; and consequently all, without exception, whether they be strong and intelligent or otherwise, have their interests best subserved by a mutual forbearance and a certain degree of order among all the members of society, let them be of whatever degree of station and mental and physical development; and this at once establishes a line of duty which all have to practise towards each other.

Let us now take the second element in the compo-

sition of our duty, that we are emanations from a Creator: and we have at once an additional motive for submitting to certain restrictions and artificial restraints upon our will,—I call artificial those which are not based upon physical inability, and which are therefore not originating in the powerlessness of man, but in the will of some one superior, or in a conventional agreement with society at large, and are superadded as a governing principle over and above to that which is impossible for him to accomplish by not having been endowed by nature with the faculties for its achievement. If we now regard ourselves as deriving our being and the power of exertion from the Supreme: we cannot avoid acknowledging to ourselves the legitimate right on his part to ask of us to use our faculties in such a manner as *He* may direct, and to eschew using them, even if inclination should prompt, in every case and at every season when this may be demanded by Him for any cause whatever. Now, as it is not to be expected that every man is to receive a particular illumination, in order to teach him what he is to do and what to avoid: it is enough that there be general laws and principles by which all may regulate their doings and omissions, and act agreeably to the wishes of their Creator. It is then not so much the abridgment of our natural liberty of action which is contemplated, as the limiting of our rights in reference to other men and the Creator; since every act, whether small or great, must have an effect somewhere beyond ourselves, so soon as it proceeds beyond those things which have reference to the mere preservation of our physical existence and health; nay, even these again may become legitimate

subjects of legislation, inasmuch as we are here by the express permission of God, endowed with his gifts; wherefore both our existence and the powers of mind and body bestowed on us were conferred for a certain purpose, though this be unknown to us; consequently our own personal life and well-being are matters in which He may be supposed to feel a paternal interest, and therefore He has a just right to prescribe to us how we are to act, so that our life and health may be preserved in the best possible manner. And as, on the other hand, no man scarcely stands so isolated that his existence can be a matter of perfect indifference to all mankind: society has also a right to demand of him that he is to do nothing to injure his health and life, so that his exertions, when required, may contribute to the support of his family, and by the bestowal of counsel and the personal service of the state, to the general welfare.

Let us take a view of religion by this simple light, and what is it? Merely the regulations which the Creator has instituted for the preservation of a knowledge of his providence, for the security of society, and for the preservation of the individual; or what is the same, for the promotion of the general good. To know that He rules, that He wills our happiness, that He watches over the affairs of nations and individuals, will leave us always ample room for the exercise of all our faculties in a useful and agreeable manner, though our life should be prolonged to any imaginable extent; and whatever religion denies to us, we may be assured, will militate against our natural duty to God and the happiness of society, and this at last is all which the greatest claimant of personal liberty

can reasonably demand; since he is a creature of God whether he is willing to acknowledge it or not, and is amenable by his being here to the laws of society in his relative position to his fellow-men. To any single individual the religious laws may be oppressive, he may not feel the want of them, nor comprehend the reason for their enactment; but this does not say, that any unjust burden has been placed upon him, or that his legitimate sphere of action has been uselessly circumscribed.

Religion in all its manifold prohibitions has accordingly but one object, that is the general welfare, and is intended to produce a state of society, in which the Creator is regarded as the supreme, the legitimate Source of all authority, and mankind as equals in origin, in rights and in destiny, all having a uniform claim to each other's good-will and offices of kindness. It is easy then to understand from what source opposition to religion springs: it is namely, the idea of self-sufficiency which raises a man in his own estimation above the prescribed rules and laws enacted for the general observance; since he vainly imagines that, however necessary they may be to others so as to insure among the rest of mankind his own safety and peace, he is not for the moment bound to adhere to them, either because a good opportunity for transgression presents itself, or because his own intellect will prevent any hurtful result to arise from his conduct, or because he will not listen to instruction from an overweening sense of pride and a confidence in his judgment. The very idea of unbelief is a species of pride, an evidence merely that the unbeliever does not wish to listen to divine teaching;

his own sense is sufficient, so he imagines, to teach him how to act; and he is therefore incredulous with respect to the first assertion of religion, on which it is based, that there has been given to us a revelation as a special gift from heaven. Every such admission is a gainsaying of the perfect efficacy of human reason; consequently the egotist will not acknowledge, by an observance of positive religious precepts, that there is anything which he could solely obtain from a superior Source, in matters which relate to the government of himself in moral concerns; hence, though he must often feel convinced that there is truth and sublimity in the revelation which is in our possession, he will affect to disbelieve, because one or the other of its precepts would act as a restraint upon his inclination, not because he does not deem such regulations beneficial in the case of other persons.

The same was the cause of the transgression of our forefathers. They had been promised that with obedience to the divine law, they should have plenty in all their boundaries, as the physical evidence of divine favour; that they should be exempt from disease, famine and war, as the outward token that their course of life was pleasing to God: while at the same time the Lord would establish among them his residence, whence unseen pure spiritual blessings should be imparted to their souls. But this polity was accompanied with many restrictions, both political and individual; the mighty and the rich were ordered to be liberal to the needy to protect those who were helpless, and to succour the distressed; they were told to let universal freedom prevail among all their brothers of the house of Israel so soon as the

jubilee, the year of liberty and release, had been proclaimed at its periodical recurrence, that is, once in every fifty years; it was then that the poor man should return to his family, and the paternal estate, which he had been compelled to dispose of, was to be restored to him free from any charge of mortgage-right or annual rent to the purchasers. In personal conduct, the Sabbath was established as a weekly day of rest; many degrees of consanguinity were prohibited as those from which marriages could not take place; certain kinds of food were interdicted, and many ceremonial acts were prescribed which were to be performed by Israelites in consequence of their being in covenant with their heavenly King. In short, the Israelites were hemmed round with ordinances which were not obligatory upon their gentile neighbours; no man however powerful had any especial rights, consequently the great could not acquire that absolute control over the humble as was the case with the heathens of those days; and no matter how far a man might have progressed in scientific attainments, he was governed by the selfsame laws which bound the unlettered ploughman who toils in the field from sunrise until evening, or the simple shepherd who feeds his flock on some lonely mountain-top or the pastures of the desert. With the Israelites it was all "serve God, and love thy neighbour;" under the one head many acts of personal sanctity were demanded, some of which interfered with the ease and the pursuit of pleasure on the part of the worldling; and under the other, the least act of injustice, of fraud, or of deception, was visited by judicial punishment, or when committed in high places, and could thus not be reached

in the ordinary course, it was denounced by the prophets, the messengers of the Lord. So stood the case, when the unbridled license of heathenism attracted the attention of the Hebrew people; and they truly considered that there was an absolute agreement between the service of the God of Jacob, and that universal moral sanctity and exercise of justice which were demanded of them; whereas heathenism furnished but few traces of morality and regard for the rights of the humble of the earth. So then they resorted to idolatry, not because they could believe in the follies and superstitions which they saw practised, but because, by throwing off the God of the Scriptures, they would also rid themselves of the onerous restrictions which their self-indulgence had to encounter in the execution of the divine precepts. And thus they sinned. What was now the result? Did freedom increase in the land with the dismissal of the priests from the family of Aaron? was the liberty to sacrifice through any one and at every place, the enjoyment of the greatest freedom of action, promotive of the happiness and security of the lower classes and the peace of the state? Far from it; with the increase of idolatry came the prevalence of licentiousness in the family-circle; came the state of vassalage, of slavery of free-born Israelites to their wealthy neighbours; came the forgetfulness of justice, so that the stranger's cause was unheeded, and the widow and the orphan pleaded in vain for their rights; came disunion in the state and a rapid descent from the high degree of refinement which it once had attained. Thus therefore complains the prophet Isaiah: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!

for the Lord hath spoken, Children have I nourished, and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider;" meaning, that the ingratitude of Israel was beyond measure. In Egypt we were bondmen, groaning under an almost hopeless slavery, when God manifested himself to our fathers, and purchased us through his goodness to be his people. And many other acts of mercy also had been superadded; but when all the promises of kindness and truth had been faithfully accomplished, we forgot all that had occurred, and though grown great under the fostering care of our heavenly education, we rebelled against the Father who had done all this for us. More ungrateful than the ox who soon learns to know the man who has bought him, more heedless than the silly ass who returns for shelter and food to the stall where he is usually fed: we would not know the God who had proved to us his power and mercy; and the constant display of his rewards in return for our small deeds of righteousness we would not recognize as acts of his providence, but ascribed them to our own intellect, to our skill and enterprise. And then followed, as a natural consequence, that we set ourselves up above the law and its Author; and exclaims the prophet: "Wo! sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers, children that are corrupt; they have incensed the Holy One of Israel, they have departed backward." And what was the effect on the political state of the people? Again hear Isaiah: "How is she become a harlot, the faithful city! she was full of justice; righteousness lodged therein; but

now murderers." And he concludes his terrible picture of the wickedness of his own people, by saying:

שריך סוררים וחברי גנבים כלו אהב שחד ורדף
שלמנים יתום לא ישפטו וריב אלמנה לא יבוא
אליהם : ישע' א' כג':

"Thy princes are rebels, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and runneth after rewards; the fatherless they judge not, and the cause of the widow doth not come unto them." Isaiah i. 23.

It was not then the freedom from oppressive ceremonial acts which the transgressors desired, but the freedom from all control,—the privilege of being dissolute in manners, and oppressive to every one who had not the strength to defend his own cause; the orphan they did not judge, he had no powerful friends to plead his case, he appealed perhaps against one of the very judges who had plundered the estate of his deceased father; crime had become enshrined in the place of justice, and hence the lone widow could not think of approaching the workers of oppression with an appeal to listen to her cause, since she could not purchase the verdict of a venal tribunal, already corrupted by the gold or overawed by the political influence of her mighty antagonist.

Our history tells how this lawlessness ended. Even without the direct influence of divine vengeance, which caused destruction to pass speedily over the land, our commonwealth must have sunk sooner or later under such misrule. But it might have taken several centuries longer to sap the foundations of the state by slow degrees; since our people were naturally

fearless in battle, and wise in counsel and expedients: whilst their land was one full of natural defences, besides that art had been invoked to add thereto by walls and towers and other appliances of the military art. Such a people and such a land might have bid defiance to any nation under ordinary circumstances; but under the influence of a load of sin our warriors stumbled on the day of strife, their swords were blunted, and their arrows were pointless, and their javelins were sent forth harmless, and our fortified cities crumbled into dust before the blows of the assailant, and desolation took up its abode in the fertile valleys and the forest-clad hills and mountains of Palestine. And what did we gain by the exchange of the theocracy for the freedom of the heathens? Let our mournful history tell, how instead of the mild restraints which are merely the checks upon unbridled license, we had to submit to all manner of hardship and sorrow, inflicted on us by those very nations whose habits we were anxious to copy, whose false gods we foolishly adopted. If ever the truth of any system and its justice were vindicated by history, the law of Moses stands justified before all the world, as that which would, if obeyed, contribute most to render a people happy and free, enlightened and pure; and it therefore claims our regard, and challenges our adoption, if even upon grounds of reason solely.—But yet what does meet our view? how is the precious gold dimmed too in our day! the same folly which our fathers committed is again ours; for we wish to follow gentile rites, we are anxious to cast off the burdens of the law. Look abroad and behold how many there are who have thrown aside

the yoke of religion, who love the daughters of the stranger, who deny their portion in Israel and Israel's God, who hate their brothers, and will not heed the voice of the Mighty One of Jacob! And how many are there who are lukewarm, careless about being servants in God's house, who, like their fathers of old, know not the Master of the universe, who, while they partake largely of his bounty, refuse to be guided by his counsel! Our fathers, beloved brothers! sinned and they are not, and we bear their iniquity to this day in our dispersion; because we have not yet returned from transgression, nor sought the presence of our God with repentance and prayer. But shall we thus continue to brave the wrath which perhaps even now is gone forth? can we count forever on impunity? shall our state of present security be never disturbed? O let us flee ere the storm bursts in its fierceness; let us call to one another to remember our accountability, that we are servants of a King whose vigilance never sleeps, but whose favour is also inexhaustible if we perform his will. Each son of Israel has received his mission to act rightly himself, and to induce many to return from evil unto the fold of God. Do we fulfil this duty? are we earnest enough in our righteousness? sedulous enough in warning? O! it is a fearful thing to see the indifference with which religion is regarded, the constant endeavour to throw it aside as a useless burden! But again and again have we felt that under it is our only safety, that, though with it we are exposed to the malice of others, without it we are sure to perish. And the recurrence of our annual season of mourning for the children of God who fell by the sword, and the de-

struction of the temple, which sunk twice through our sins, ought to confirm us in our resolve to abide true to the sacred standard of the God of Jacob. Let us hope, then, that our example and our exhortation, even if this be from the young to the old, and the humble to the exalted, may contribute to spread righteousness in Israel, and a sincere return to the God of our fathers; by which means He will have mercy on Zion and build the walls of Jerusalem, speedily and in our day. Amen.

Ab 3d. } 5607.
July 17th. }

DISCOURSE X.

THE WATERS OF LIFE.

O Source of eternal life, in whose presence is the fulness of holiness! bless us with that grace and the consciousness of thy favour, which Thou in days of yore didst bestow on those devoted men who walked before mankind as a light unto salvation. Thou didst then call us thy children; and we then full often experienced thy paternal protection and thy benevolent vigilance which guarded us against the arrows of the adversaries of thy law. But O, Father! we are now severed from our land, disjointed in many fragments, and the evil of adverse circumstances lays many a hinderance in our path, on which we struggle to obtain righteousness. Yet Thou art truly the Guardian

of Israel; thy eye sleepeth not, nor doth slumber fall with its silken weight on thy eyelids. Aid us, then, O God, who delightest in righteousness! give us understanding to know thy ways, and calm for us the waves of the stormy ocean of life, that we may be enabled to pursue the even tenor of our way, unawed by the power of the ungodly who conspire against the peace of our soul. And whereas our strength is naught, as we are defenceless unless upheld by thy arm: be Thou our defence, and render as nothing all the wicked designs of those who rise up against us for evil; and let thy favour be made evident over all those who combine to spread a knowledge of thy will, so that they may be made instrumental in withdrawing many from sin; and hasten the time of the Redeemer who will come to Zion for the removal of transgression, and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel under the shadow of thy protection. Amen!

Brethren!

Whatever exists in the world is the gift of God; the greatest good ever achieved by mankind, no less than the smallest plant which administers to our health and gratification, but is derived from Him, and Him only. Man may invent, contrive, arrange, and improve; still the material wherewith to labour, and the capacity of the mind which prompts the action, are bestowals from the Supreme Source, gifts, in other words, granted unto the sons of the earth for their use and improvement. To judge then by analogy merely, we would arrive at the conclusion that moral ideas are also a gift of God, not bestowed for the purpose of elevating the thinking and intelligent above

the thoughtless and foolish as superior beings in the scale of society, but to conduce to the spiritual improvement of all, by which means every one capable of action may succeed in doing what will cause the least possible injury to himself and others, and produce the largest possible amount of general good. What is more, they are as freely given as the air which we breathe; they are the equal right of all men, and cannot be monopolized by any particular class. They are a universal property of which every one may partake without molestation, and to the progress of which each one ought to contribute his share of activity and influence. The power to become morally good and great is assigned to each individual member of society; the capacity of mind alone will determine the degree of political and social excellence which a man can attain; but in morals it requires none of the far-reaching power of intellect, no great depth of learning which will place him on a level with the exalted of the earth, but only the deep-seated feeling of dependence on the bounty and power of the Supreme, and the conviction that all acts which a mortal performs are within the cognizance of an ever-watchful Providence. We occasionally hear certain sycophants, those flatterers of human vanity who bow at the shrine of wealth or political prominence, speak of the natural mental elevation of the nobly born, as though moral excellence, liberality, courage, truthfulness, and fidelity were by nature the inheritance of those nurtured in the lap of luxury or under the shadow of power; to them the poor, the humble, who are born to toil and reared to labour, are an inferior race, with grovelling propensities, with ignoble de-

sires, with appetites appeasable by gross indulgence only, without aspirations for the noble, without desire for mental elevation. But are these the characteristics of the poor? Are they indeed different in their nature from the children of ease and refinement? Perhaps they may not be able to express their sympathy, their sorrow, their joy in the measured terms of a honeyed phraseology, which distinguishes those who have been from infancy habituated to an intercourse with the educated and wealthy classes of society; their mirth may perhaps be noisy, their grief loud, their sympathy boisterous; but who can say that the feelings which ennoble human nature are not as sincere with them as with those who are better able to restrain all outward expression of them under the conventional mantle of outward coldness and formality? The simple-hearted son of the earth is struck with external objects as keenly as the pampered child of the saloons of fashion; but he does not feel that it is requisite for him to smile only in the prescribed manner which the rules of etiquette demand, or to weep only as loudly as polite ears are accustomed to tolerate; but he yields his heart to the emotions of the moment; his whole being is penetrated with the idea that excites him, and he expresses it in the homely style of untutored nature, not the less sincere, not the less ardent, because he knows little, and values less what others require of those who tread a different path of life from what he himself is accustomed to. Whatever distinction fortune, position in society, and education may introduce among mankind, however greatly a high state of refinement may soften the ills and cares of existence,

they do not authorize us to assume, that a less degree of eminence in any of the points enumerated leaves the mind less able to acquire moral elevation, or that these humble and less favoured ones will commit enormities and gross violations of the rules of right, any more than that the possession of wealth, or station, or the acquisition of great knowledge, gives the least dispensation to permit us to commit those things which are condemnable in those less favoured.

Analogy thus and experience give us the result of a uniform, universal, moral equality of mankind, and consequently we must assume an equality in responsibility for moral actions, provided only that a responsibility does attach to mortals for their acts and omissions. But the very existence of moral feelings, and the pleasure experienced in doing something in conformity to their impulse, already exhibit both their usefulness and necessity; and any disregard of them must therefore be in the very nature of things injurious to the general welfare; and as the Supreme Ruler cannot be indifferent to the happiness of his creatures, any delinquency in conduct must expose us to his displeasure in the precise proportion of the injury we have inflicted; and by the same rule, that all mankind have an appreciation of moral excellence, all must be equally responsible for their conformity or non-conformity with the acts required of them as free agents, endowed with the attributes and capacities incident to human nature.

Now it is not less remarkable than soul-inspiring to the believer in revelation, that precisely these views, so reasonable in themselves, are the very doctrines which the prophets and teachers of Israel have

left to the world as the emanation of the divine wisdom with which they were inspired. There are many passages establishing this view of the universality of moral perception, and an equality of power in acquiring the needful degree of moral excellence. But no single text is more emphatic than the one from Isaiah lv. 1:

הוי כל צמא לכו למים ואשר אין לו כסף לכו שברו ואכלו ולכו שברו בלוא כסף ובלא מחיר יין וחלב: ישע' נה' א':

"Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the water, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come ye, buy without money and without price wine and milk."

That the prophet speaks of a spiritual food, of a spiritual drink, is proved not alone by the invitation held out to the needy to purchase without silver or gold, but by the context; because he continues: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken then unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the promised mercies of David, which are sure!" The holy preacher here expostulates with his hearers, in the name of God, about the vanity of spending all for worldly things, of purchasing at an exorbitant price the corporeal bread which is not sufficient to satisfy the demand of the spirit, and of labouring incessantly for the acquisition of those goods which

after all leave a painful void in the thinking soul. And who is there, be he among the noblest, the mightiest, or the wisest of the earth, who has not felt tired of the enjoyments which he once so ardently craved? There is a youth with feelings of ambition; he pants for glory, he covets to see his name registered among those whose deeds fill the pages of history; and he runs the race of the blood-stained warrior, and the wheels of his chariot are soiled with the gore of slaughtered enemies; and now he reposes as an aged man upon his dearly-purchased laurels; with many a wound on his brow, with many a scar on his worn-out frame: and think you that he has not toiled for what will not satisfy his holy desires? think you that he feels the content, the mental repose which he rushed after like fleeting phantoms on the field of battle? O! search not too deeply in his agonized heart; there are seated discontent and anguish; for he who shed his blood freely in his country's cause in order to acquire a name loathes his own deeds, because of the ingratitude of his countrymen; they assign him perhaps the post of honour; still they throw a doubt over his disinterestedness, and ascribe to him motives of self-aggrandizement, and his success to chance, and not to the deep genius which he claims for himself, in having snatched the palm of victory from opposing hosts, not so much by brute courage as by his mental superiority and intellect, which secured success by patient thought and ready adaptation of occurring circumstances in the hour of trial and strife, whilst he disdained to enrich himself with the captured treasures of the enemy, and shared the toils of the commonest soldier, and partook of food

as coarse and scant as the humblest in the camp.—Or you imagine perhaps that he who has inherited or acquired a throne has truly obtained the exalted prize of existence, the unfading contentment of the spirit which leaves nothing to sigh for on earth. But this also is not the case. The highest position does not exempt man from care; and the mere possession of power exposes one to the same discontents which the possession of any other earthly goods engenders, or at least not removes; the mind is ever restless and active; and even if farther acquisition is not desired or impossible, then the very height of the position afflicts the spirit with a feeling of vacancy, a want of something to acquire, which authorizes us to assert that labour herein too has been expended for that which satisfies not, and which therefore does not render the mind happy.—But the wise, you may perhaps think, have surely not laboured in vain; they have earned for themselves a reputation above that of the men of power and strife; their ideas are cast abroad on the ocean of thought, they enter freely, through the minute subdivision of channels, into the palace and the cottage; they are felt in the workshops and the assembled wisdom of nations; they bring consolation to the mourner and amusement to the sick sufferer; they entertain childhood and render pleasant the declining days of the gray-haired man of fourscore years, when his weakened limbs forbid his moving abroad, and his hands refuse any longer to labour. Most men would think that the reflection of having caused so much good must render the men of science the happiest of their race, and they no doubt accuse them of want of gratitude towards the

Deity if they should express aught of discontent with their lot. But, alas! mere science, mere knowledge, mere wisdom, are powerless of imparting contentment; they who possess them in the highest degree, they whose works are perhaps scattered over town and country, palace and cottage, dwell in penury, whilst others luxuriate on the proceeds of their days of toil and nights of incessant application; or perhaps they are ignorant of the very good which they have been made instrumental of effecting, since envy and malice may have reported to them the evil which is spoken concerning them, and carefully concealed all the good which mankind express of their benefactors, and give no utterance to the blessings which were heaped upon the names of those unknown who have beguiled many an hour of pain, or breathed comfort through their silent though eloquent pages into the spirit of the mourner. We will not view in this connexion the uselessness of wealth and the pursuit of pleasure, the hollowness of which the commonest observation must discover; but we may freely contend, that even in the satisfaction obtained from high renown, power, and learning, even extended usefulness which the best of men consider justly their greatest earthly acquisition, there is still that want of perfect gratification, and that discontent with our lot, which must ever leave every human happiness far from complete, and cause us to look yet farther for a realization of our desires.

Yes, on earth everything is incomplete; the flower only blooms to fade apace, and the sun only shines to yield to the envious clouds that speedily envelop his face with the mantle of darkness. Virtue itself fails

of reaching perfection when based solely on human attainments, and wisdom only delights for the moment to leave the soul sunk in yet deeper despondency. The youth sighs for the approach of manhood; and barely is this attained than he grieves for the days of innocence, when all nature was fair to look upon, when tears and smiles alternated upon his visage, as change the raindrops and the sunshine in the spring-time of the year. Therefore says the prophet: "Ho *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no silver." Every human being feels the same wound; every one that breathes has a thirst for the refreshing stream which, he is sure, flows somewhere to gratify his earnest craving. Every one is therefore invited to come and seek the fountain, even he who is not blessed with silver, with worldly means to purchase earthly goods; no one is asked to bring power or wisdom to authorize him to join in the competition for the precious draught; but the call is general, for every thirsty one to come to the waters of life, not because he can pay for them, only because they are offered to his acceptance; the Almighty presents them to each one who demands them, and whether he have merits or none, whether he be rich or poor in deeds or earthly possessions, it matters not, provided he come upon the call addressed to him, and ask in return for the bread of life which, when eaten, never cloys, and he petitions for those drinks which never intoxicate, which throw no chains around the body, and darken not for a time the light of the spirit. It is such bread, such water, such wine and milk which mankind are invited to seek and to find; and in what do they consist? To which an-

swers the text: "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear and your soul shall live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant." It is the law of God which is to effect all the remedies for our unhappy state; it is this which is to add contentment to the enjoyment of all perishable gifts we may have received, which is to sweeten every bitterness which we may have to taste, lighten every burden which rests heavily on our shoulders, and assuage every disease which may afflict us. For the man who inclines his ear to the instruction of God, who only acts in conformity with the duties which religion teaches him, will always regard himself as a child of a universal Providence, of an inexhaustible Goodness and paternal Care. He may see his efforts unavailing, he may find his hopes deceived and his prosperity turned to affliction; but he will nevertheless feel secure of an ultimate happy result; because he is convinced, that no heavier burden will be laid upon him than he is enabled to bear by the strength already inherent in him, or which he will receive in the progress of his trials. And this is a peculiarity of religious fortitude, far exceeding that derived from philosophical reflections or stoical indifference; in the first of these it is at most a submission to an unconquerable necessity, to which man yields not because he considers it best for himself, but only from his inability to resist; and in the latter case it is a sort of insensibility to outward impressions, a species of a deadness of the natural functions and a stupefaction of the spirit to any and every event which may occur. The philosopher and stoic may perhaps succeed in resisting the impulse of self-destruction when evils come thick and

fast upon them; but it is most probable, that they will hasten away from the scene of action and rush unbidden into their Maker's presence, because they will prefer the momentary pain of a dissolution of their system, which is at last according to their creed the unavoidable fate which is suspended over all mankind, to the long and weary suffering day by day of the wasting hand of disease, of which one sees no probable termination short of the grave, the constant pressure of poverty which increases sooner than it diminishes, the longer one struggles against its fetters, or the loss of a reputation unjustly robbed from him by the tongue of malevolence and the pestiferous breath of slander. But let the humble believer find himself so situated, he will endeavour to seek, by deeply and inly searching himself, whether or not he may have incurred guilt through the commission of sin or indiscretion, whether accordingly it is not a just chastisement he has to bear as a paternal visitation from above, that he may be purified from transgression. When he discovers his sin, he will accordingly endeavour to remodel his life by the standard of the law which he has been taught; and in case he should be unable to convince himself that his own misdeeds have caused his sorrow (but where is the man who honestly can say that he has not merited punishment?) he will still submit with cheerful meekness, and await with patience the time when the hand that smites will be transformed into one that heals; for he feels convinced that life and death, wounds and cures, are the bestowals of the same merciful Father, who wills only the happiness of his creatures. He therefore can bear with calm resignation, not with

mere stubborn submission or with a callous indifference, the pangs of adverse circumstances, the malice of men, or the throes of bodily ailment; in the one case living upon the smallest pittance, thanking the Giver of all for the morsel of dry bread and the cup of simple water, equally as for the finest dainties in more prosperous days; in the second referring his cause to the Most High for vindication, sure that ultimately even so severe a trial will work out its own cure and redound to his advantage; and in the last case he will look upon the Author of his life as his Physician who, if it meets his blessed pleasure, can and will send a cure for his affliction, and render his flesh again as healthy as that of an infant, and prolong, if so it meets his all-wise views, the days of his pilgrimage on earth.—And with all, though no relief should come, though day by day the efforts of enemies should more and more prevail, though minute by minute the approach of death become more apparent: the servant of God need not quail, and his eye need not blanch, though around him is closed out all approach of earthly hope, and the bonds of dissolution are fast encircling his mortal frame. For beyond the grave there smiles to him a happy land, the home of his immortal spirit, where poverty and penury are not known, where neither ingratitude nor slander embitters the days, and where neither sickness nor death mars the sunshine of perennial existence. And then he is convinced that it is altogether within his own power to become a participant in all this great happiness, heaped up in the treasuries of the Lord for his servants who have faithfully trusted in Him, who have hearkened to his voice, though carnal desires

allured to enjoyment, and who walked the path of simple faith and pious trust, although the worldlings invited to pursue with them the road of pleasure, or that of personal aggrandizement and high-towering ambition.

This then is the meaning of the words: "Hear, and your soul shall live," in a life where happiness is perfect, where the incidents attaching themselves to the most perfect and exalted state of humanity disturb not the inward tranquillity; but where the absence of all distracting agencies leaves the soul free to indulge in the everlasting light which springs from the presence of the Lord of life. "And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the promised mercies of David which are sure." As with the sweet singer of Israel a covenant of everlasting kindness was made, which covenant will not be broken, although for a time strangers occupy his throne, and barbarians worship on the site which he appointed for the service of his God: so will it be with each one whom our Father calls near unto Him, because that He found him acceptable through his pious deeds. Let evil for a time befall him, let terrors unknown to the luxurious and happy surround him on all sides: he will nevertheless be shielded from destruction; the promise of a better future is well secured, and he will live to see the pleasures of eternity, and experience to its full extent what constitutes the delights of those who have through trials and through shame persevered in their innocence, and borne the yoke of adversity, as becomes those who have full confidence in the word and the mercy of their heavenly Father.

This is religion, this its effect; and from it you will

easily deduce its tendency: it is in brief a merciful dispensation by which we are to attain that happiness, that perfection of felicity not otherwise within our reach. And we therefore say with justice that it is a gracious gift of God, for which we ought to be thankful to a yet greater degree than for mere worldly things, and it is therefore no idle phrase when we say: "Blessed art Thou O Lord! who givest the law." But we ought to feel it deeply, that it is this law alone which crowns our life, which opens for us the avenues of that blissful state, which is denied unto us when we only follow our inclinations, and seek not to know the ways of the Lord. And then the prophet invites all to come to the water. And why does he compare the religion of Heaven to water? Because this element so necessary to animal life is universally diffused in every place fitted for human habitation, and its necessity is therefore not greater than its universality. It is found in the mountains and in the plains; and to have it always in requisite plenty, the rains of heaven descend and replenish the pools and the springs, and these carry their superabundance into the reservoirs appointed for them, the lakes and rivers. Even so is the law of God, it has been given to us for our guide, in a language rendering it intelligible to all who come under its rule; and to insure its permanence God ever raises up those who are endowed with intelligence, that they may go forth among the sons of man, and scatter abroad the knowledge which they have received: so that from all hearts there may flow a tribute of submission to the will of the universal Father, by which all may become worthy of his mercy and love. It is only owing to the unwillingness of sinful

men that they are not taught what is demanded of them; they do not wish to live, and hence they seek the roads which end in death and perdition.—But let us not lose our firm trust in the ultimate triumph of holiness; the struggle may be prolonged to a time of which we can form no adequate idea; still the predicted event will surely come to pass; and then righteousness will have fought its last contest, and the fear of God will be as universally diffused, as are now the elements which sustain our animal life. The sufferings of the servants of God will be changed into blessings, and their mourning into heartfelt rejoicing; in those times the wolf and the sheep will lie down together, and on all the earth there will be peace and harmony, and in the seat of justice there shall be truth, and the humble shall not call in vain upon the man of power. For the anointed of the Lord will reign, and he will, under the providence of Him who will send him, "decide in equity for the meek of the earth," and promote peace and good-will among all nations. Amen.

Elul 1st.
Aug. 13th. } 5607.

DISCOURSE XI.

ISRAEL'S RELATION TO GOD.

GUARDIAN of man! be nigh unto us in our afflictions, and hear our voice whenever we call on Thee in our time of need; for we are powerless on the day of our glory, and helpless dependants in the midst of our deeds of might; and whence shall come our help, when the clouds of adversity lower over our seeming security? whence our aid when the storm bursts in its fury and terror? But Thou, O our Father! art our stay, our strong support in the hour of sorrow, and from thy right hand comes to us enlargement, and from thy spirit is breathed unto us consolation. O come, then, and be with us at all hours of our existence; come and dwell in the midst of the assemblies of thy worshippers; that they may daily and hourly enjoy thy mercy, and be adjudged worthy of thy unbounded favour, which is held as a shield over the whole structure of the universe which thy greatness has called forth.—Do this, O God of truth! because Thou art good, and because Thou willest the salvation of mankind through faith and obedience. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In the section of the law appointed to be read this day, we meet with the reciprocal relation of God to Israel clearly defined by the great prophet just before

his withdrawal to a better life, at the moment when he was anxious for the welfare of the people whom he had led so long, and when the blessed Lord permitted him to see, if any thing more clearly than ever before, what was to happen hereafter, and gave him the power of condensing volumes of thoughts in few but comprehensive words; so that they might be remembered as memorials to everlasting, and readily treasured up in the minds and recollections of ordinary men. We will recite the whole passage, since we cannot lose one word of it without missing a portion of the instruction it conveys and the hopes which it inspires. I refer to the four verses, from the 16th to the 19th verse of the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. "This day the Lord thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances; and thou shalt keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast this day acknowledged that the Lord is thy God, and that thou wilt walk in his ways and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath acknowledged thee this day to be unto Him a peculiar people, as He hath spoken unto thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments."

ולתתך עליון על כל הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה
ולשם ולתפארת ולהיותך עם קדש לה' אלהיך כאשר
דבר: דבר' כו' יט':

"That He may set thee high above all the nations that He hath made, in praise, in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken." Deut. xxvi. 19.

We have been often invited and solicited by many who feel truly friendly to us among the gentiles, by men and women who sincerely profess to believe in revelation, to forsake our religion, and to embrace whatever system or ideas of belief they, our not-Jewish friends, may believe as the truth. We do not impugn the honesty of such zealots; we will give them full credit to be sincerely anxious for our salvation; but we must say that they have studied Scriptures to but small advantage, if they can imagine that we could forsake our connexion with ancient Israel, and still claim to act in obedience to the will of God, as they do who, whilst they have adopted a belief unknown to our ancestors, claim nevertheless to be the true spiritual Israel, not, it is true, the real Israel descended from Jacob, but one selected, it is averred, and made thus through grace, when the children of the patriarchs lost their election through rejecting the messenger of new things who had come among them, and of whom they knew nothing, nor viewed him otherwise than as an ordinary man from among themselves. The Israelites have grievously sinned; they often incurred, and to this day incur, the displeasure of the Most High for their rebellion and backsliding; but if their sins had only been like the one which we have just mentioned, then would the wrath of God never have been kindled against us and against our land; for then we should have basked in the sunshine of divine favour, and through the mouth of messengers of Heaven we should have been notified, that our heart had been purified and our deeds accepted from on High.—To little purpose indeed must the Bible have been studied, if the main-

tenance of our faith can be justly charged unto us as a crime; and little conception can men have of the justice of God, if they do invest the One who never changes with the fallible attributes of human imperfection, by saying that He selected a people for his worship, and then cast them off utterly, because another nation had to be chosen, the others failing to accomplish their mission. And little faith can that Israelite have, who, listening to such vain appeals, imagines himself absolved from his allegiance, and joins, thus induced, the multitudes of the earth, who are not of Jacob's seed, in their newly invented rites, and believes with them in a god who cannot save.

Let us take up our text and see what God demands of us, and in what respects we are with Him in a covenant of everlasting duty and love: it is simply duty that is demanded from us to Him, and we are promised love from Him, the most Holy, to us, children of a day, creatures of the earth, whose body will be necessarily given to corruption, and whose spirit is fleeting, anxious to return to the home whence it came, that it may hie away and be at rest.—First, the prophet says: "This day the Lord thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances." Now the commonest understanding, the merest child, must naturally ask, "What laws are here meant?—where are we to look for them? were they known to the persons to whom Moses spoke? were they familiar things to which he could refer? were they written down in his day? or were they something future, which was to be developed in after-centuries, of which he himself had no knowledge, the details of which were unknown to his hearers?" These are

simple questions, and demand an answer as simple as themselves; for it is to the general mass the prophet spoke, or rather speaks at this day, because the very words which were addressed to our fathers, appeal to us at this very hour in all their force and cogency. Moses, then, to give the simple answer which was then and is now needed, referred not to things future and unknown, but to laws and institutions which were then and there revealed; "this day the Lord thy God commandeth thee," not in days past, not in days to come, the first of which might have been forgotten, the second of which could not then be known, but those ideas, those precepts, those commands and duties, the knowledge of which was then just imparted, in the reception of which they were themselves the receivers, and in imparting which he was himself the teacher. Hence, whatever was manifested through Moses to the people of his day, is the subject of obedience here demanded; for we are told to keep and do them with all our heart and all our soul. But the word "keep" has also the signification of "watching over;" "guarding against encroachments;" "defending against attacks;" or else it would have been enough to say, "and thou shalt do them with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Yet we see that this is not enough; the laws must be kept, watched over, guarded, defended with intense interest and perseverance; the future can only be hoped for, not so watched over; it may be confided in, but never kept and observed; for it is not present, and therefore escapes for the moment from our power of action. It may be properly said to us this day, that we shall observe at a future period that which will then be

declared to us; but at the present moment we cannot watch over its preservation; this can only be predicated of things now present, already placed within the range of our control. So then we are commanded to guard the commandments. Against what? Against whatever opinions which may tend to weaken our attachment for them, against every adversary who may endeavour to rob us of their precious privileges. They were placed in our custody, they are our inheritance now, our treasure transmitted to us by our living Father; and we are told that we ought to preserve them, because He has conferred them on us, and we are to fulfil all they demand, inasmuch as they are necessary to our happiness. For these are the words: "Thou hast this day acknowledged that the Lord is thy God; and the Lord hath acknowledged thee this day to be unto him a peculiar people, as He hath spoken." But how is this to be accomplished? Simply by obedience; because in accepting the Lord as our God, and in becoming his people, we pledged ourselves that we would walk in his ways, keep his statutes, his commandments, and his ordinances, and hearken to his voice. We reserved nothing to ourselves short of a full compliance with his demands on our will; He is the Eternal One whom we chose from all imaginable divinities as our adored God; there were the gods of Egypt, of Persia, of the Zabeans, and the children of the East, all of which had followers far more numerous than the Hebrews ever have been from their very institution to this very hour; yet, we the fewest of nations had rejected by our willing acceptance of Moses's message, saying that we would do all that the Lord might say, all as-

sociation in the godhead, and we claimed as our worshipful king the sole Power who can say, "I will be," to whom there is no second in descent, no associate in might and goodness; and because we confided in Him, since we had felt the extent of his greatness and invincible strength, we submitted to be taught by his wisdom, and to observe faithfully, and to "keep" his ordinances. In recompense He promised us, in the words of our text, that we should be his peculiar people; separated through this means from the errors of gentiles, and be placed high in the rank of nations, and excel all mankind in praise, in name, and in honour, and that we should be a holy people, unto Him the Lord, as He had spoken. Spoken when? and to whom? Even to Abraham, when he said to him, "Walk before me and be perfect;" when He promised him a son by his wife Sarah; when He promised to establish his covenant with Isaac; when He commanded him to become circumcised in the flesh in obedience to the divine mandate; yes it was then that the Lord spoke of his covenant of everlasting protection to Abraham and to his descendants, but always through the same means as in our text, that is to say, through obedience to whatever the Lord might teach.

Now it was through Moses that the promise to Abraham was so far accomplished, that the sons of Jacob received a consistent code of religious, moral, and civil laws, by which they were enabled to pursue the course pleasing to God, or, to use the words of Scripture, "to walk in his ways." The uncertainty, if there ever was any, arising from an unwritten law (though we may assume that the most necessary duties

were already revealed in the earliest stages of the world), was then and there removed, and a clear definition of the path of salvation given to the people at large, not to the learned and intelligent only, but to the simple and untutored also, to which fact your attention has been called before. God was acknowledged universally among Israel, and his ways were universally revealed among the same people. It required then, it requires now, no comment, to understand in the main the precept, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" and if there were, the exposition was given at once: "Six days mayest thou labour, but the seventh day is a rest in honour of the Lord thy God, then shalt thou do no manner of work;" the command is sufficiently comprehensive, forbidding every exertion which resembles labour, and thus excepts nothing as permitted on that day. So also "Honour thy father and thy mother;" whoever has parents, whoever had parents, and this includes the whole human race, is bound to treat those with respect who are his earthly progenitors, when living, and not to malign their memory, when dead. But equally clear is the prohibition, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The presence of God is everywhere, his existence is through all time; He announced himself to us as the Eternal One who had redeemed us; and as we have always existed since then, the same reason is still applicable to us; and through all the ages of our being the same appeal is addressed to all who come under the guidance of the law, to acknowledge no other divinity than the One whom we always adored as our Redeemer. The revelation was intended as a plain exponent of opinions and du-

ties, or rather of duties founded on opinions; and as each Israelite was a descendant of Abraham, or one adopted into the covenant among his children, all were bound to accept and did receive a clear knowledge of their position to God and of their obligation to Him through their membership in Israel. And it is precisely this pre-eminence which constitutes our praise, our name, and our honour; it is not any worldly advantage, not any high rank in civilization and refinement, though these are not incompatible with it, which is promised, but simply a superior knowledge of what is due from man to his Maker, by which blessings both temporal and spiritual will be called down to invigorate those who trust in the Lord. Hence arises the beautiful custom which is so peculiarly Jewish of reading the law every Sabbath and other times in the midst of our assemblies; we require but little preaching to expound the way of life, provided only all our brothers have learned what God ordains; and therefore the annual repetition of the whole Mosaic dispensation is the very means of rendering it familiar to all Israelites. If men will but take up once a week the written word of the Lord, in the language which they comprehend, but best of all if they can read it in the Hebrew understandingly and with pleasure: they will acquire an immense fund of knowledge, of the extent of which they can form no conception beforehand, and they will be armed with a safeguard against every attack which human weakness is liable to during our life on earth. Talk of the consolations of philosophy; speak of comfort through a mediator; but what are they compared to the knowledge that all proceeds from the great

Source, whose are counsel and wisdom, who is the essence of truth and goodness? And then He is not the inexorable master, who punishes because He feels a delight in suffering; He is not surrounded by inevitable circumstances or necessity which prevent Him from exercising his will; He is not circumscribed in mercy, so that his wrath should burn forever, and He not be able to pardon; but on the contrary, He is long-suffering and waits constantly, perchance man may repent and rend thus asunder the decree of evil which is impending over him; and then all the punishments are represented to us as means leading at length to an amelioration of the heart, and consequently to the ultimate happiness of the sufferer himself, provided he will apply for healing from the great Physician, so that mercy, forgiveness and health may be granted to him, because of his faith and hope.

But to maintain ourselves in the path of the religion of Moses, to be faithful to the observance of the precepts, to be distinguished above the nations in the praise, name and honour of God's chosen race, we must needs maintain the distinctive character which has been ours for so many centuries. It is futile to assert that other nations serve the Lord as well as we; nay admit that they are more pious, more devoted, more enthusiastic in all that elevates man to God; grant that we are punished for our transgressions, so often repeated that in mercy we were expelled from our ancient patrimony: all this only says, that we are unworthy despite of our superior knowledge. But can any wrong be the excuse for one yet greater? can we pretend to say, that since we were expelled from Palestine because we dis-

obeyed the will of God, we are to place ourselves beyond the possibility of obeying our religion at all? This would be a foolish proceeding, one becoming only those who had lost all faith in God, all hope of the accomplishment of his merciful promises. And say, what have the systems of gentiles to offer to us which is so valuable and holy? in what is their hope in God greater? in what respect are their morals better? by what right do they claim more than we a portion in life everlasting? But on the contrary they all preach up an exemption from the duties of our law; they absolve themselves from the rest of the Sabbath; they permit the "flesh of the swine, and the creeping thing and the mouse;" they regard as nothing the eating of the bread of affliction on the festival of our redemption; nay they abrogate circumcision, the everlasting covenant with Abraham and his children; but to crown all, they pray through a mediator, as one having alone power with God: when He emphatically declared to us that his law was everlasting; that his covenant should never be moved, that his glory He would give to no one else, that He the Only One is the Redeemer of Israel, that we should call on Him whenever we needed aid and consolation, and that He would be near to listen unto all who invoke Him in truth. On the score of expediency therefore there is no reason why we should embrace the system of the gentiles; since, all things considered, there is as much in our favour, Jews as we are, as we could obtain by any change, or which a union with them would afford us. But there is a positive advantage in our adherence to our faith: it has a superiority over all others; it is truth without disguise, belief founded on

reason, and enables all men to be equal in the knowledge of that which is the most essential for them to know; and then there is the great uniformity of opinion which is inseparable from Judaism. For though we have also in the process of evil times become disunited on questions of policy or limitations of the commandments of the law, no one has yet arisen to gainsay the principles of our faith, or to abrogate any of the chief distinguishing features of our religion; for those who act so are at once denounced as having placed themselves beyond the pale of Judaism, and are, like other apostates, traitors against their allegiance to Heaven. But it may be said with truth, that Judaism has maintained a singular uniformity of character since its first institution; there has been no violent change in its observances from the commencement, and not the least abatement in its acknowledgment of the unity of the Godhead and the eternity of his rule and providence. It is to this character of our belief, this uniformity in its practice, this universality of the knowledge thereof which distinguishes Israel, that we may point as a triumphant vindication of our adherence to the same. The Nazarene system and Mahomedanism have assumed manifold phases, especially the former; observance, and creed, and belief have been attempted to be fixed by the dicta of councils, conventions, assemblies, debates, and correspondence; but what has everything availed? The differences remain irreconcilable; and persecution has not even reached an approach to produce uniformity; whereas we have kept united for all practical purposes without even an understanding among our leading men; every one has been at liberty to

elucidate the Bible, to offer his opinions and views: and still there is a oneness of hope, a singleness of faith which may well astonish the world; and all is owing to the simplicity of the words of revelation which are as accessible to one as to the other.

But on the score of necessity, too, we cannot swerve. Our God has given us his law; He has appointed us its guardians; we are, as our text says, "to keep and to do it." Can we escape his vigilance? can our leaving his standard screen us from his cognizance? How do we know what evil we may entail upon us and our children if we forsake Him, the Lord? how do we know what torment may be in store for us, if we cease to call ourselves by the noble name through which Jacob was marked as a chief beloved by God? And then it will not avail us aught to say that, by changing our religion, we only fulfil the ultimate intention of the prophecies which have been announced concerning us. This is a mere fiction, of which not a trace can be found in Scripture, and you may freely challenge your gentile friends who ask you to join them, for a shadow of a proof to be found throughout the whole Bible. On the contrary, we are admonished to observe the law which Moses laid before the people of Israel, and this includes circumcision, the Sabbath, the Passover, the Day of Atonement, the Shophar, the Tabernacles Feast with its attendant ceremonies, the Jewish household, the prohibitions of mixtures in our garments, fields and vineyards, the worship of the sole God to the exclusion of aught else: and then tell us, how we are to do all this, if we are no longer of the faith of Israel, and adhere outwardly to a system the reverse of all this. Let nations, who are not believers,

plume themselves in a name which they have derived from us; let them vaunt in the appellation of the spiritual Israel; but tell them that they are not thereby elevated to that position by which they could claim our alliance.—Let them say that we have been driven out before the enemy from our lovely heritage, because we rejected the new covenant which they allege was sent to us first through a messenger whom we refused to listen to, since we believed him not inspired of the Lord; but again tell them, our transgressions, for which this evil befell us, were of another kind, and that long since, before the advent of that reputed prophet and his later imitators, Moses had predicted what would come over us if we did not remain faithful to the law and the testimony. Still in these very curses then pronounced is foreshadowed that they should not crush us; but that, spite of all the anguish they caused, we should nevertheless remain the people chosen from all others as the bearers of God's holy ark, the depositary of his blessed laws. And has this been accomplished or not? Let those speak who esteem us lightly; let those speak who call on us to forsake the Lord and his word. But as for ourselves, so speak ye, brothers and sisters of Israel! we have received our mission to be and to remain a light to the world; and with the word of God which is ours will we travel boldly through life, relying on his mercy and truth, that He will not fail us in the time of need. For thus said He through his prophet Isaiah (lix. 21): "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy

seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, henceforth and forever." And may for this grace his Name be blessed in the mouth of all flesh from eternity to eternity. Amen.

Elul 15th. } 5607.
Aug. 27th. }

DISCOURSE XII.

GOD'S HERITAGE.*

BRETHREN!

YOU stand here this day before the Lord your God, with your wives and children to devote this building to the service of the Redeemer of Israel, the Holy One of Jacob. It is well therefore that you and we, who are with you on this solemn occasion, should reflect upon what has been done this day, and to take due care that the impression may not be speedily removed. The Scriptures, beloved friends, have ever served for many centuries as the groundwork on which to base reflection and doctrine: let us then proceed in the same manner to select a text for the elucidation of our thoughts at this moment, when you are yet full of joy at having at length found a suitable place wherein to worship the God of your fathers.

Moses had for forty years laboured for and suffered

* Spoken at the dedication of the Synagogue Rodef Sholem, in Julianna Street, Elul, 5607.

through the people of Israel; he had seen their backslidings, heard their murmurings, and been affected to the depth of his soul by their transgressions against their eternal Benefactor. In vain had he asked to be continued among them, merely to see the land beyond Jordan; he had offended, overcome by their rebellion, and he was to mingle his bones within the plains of Moäb with the clod of the valley, and the frame which encircled erst the holy spirit, the purest and best that ever appeared among men, was to be hidden from the view of the thousands who had so long beheld their venerable teacher in the front ranks of their marching hosts. If ever, therefore, a mortal had cause to detest his countrymen, it was surely Moses at that moment, when through them his dearest hopes had been annihilated. But not so acted our teacher; he rose above all cares, foibles, and thoughts of earth, and surveyed the past and future with that prophetic eye, vouchsafed to him alone, which is not deceived by the events of the days which are gone, nor uncertain of the occurrences of those which are to follow. And it was then that, notwithstanding the many faults which he censured in our people, he exclaimed, in the conviction of its being the pure truth:

כי חלק ה' עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו : דבר' לב' ט' :

"For the portion of the Lord is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Deut. xxxii. 9.

Moses had in the preceding verses described the great care the Lord had taken of the sons of Israel, though they were a perverse and rebellious genera-

tion; and then he accounts for this goodness so unmerited on their part by the reason assigned, that the portion of the Lord among the children of the earth is the people whom he was then addressing, and that Jacob is the lot which He has chosen above all the other inhabitants of the earth, a nation to whom He had manifested his greatness, to whom He had given a law of statutes and ordinances, and to whom He would keep his truth, as sure as He is the חי עולמים the One who lives forever. And you, brethren, have arisen in the strength of faith and dedicated this house to the God whose lot of inheritance you are; heirs of the law of Moses, you have declared that you will adhere to it in its details and doctrines; you have exclaimed the words of your faith with holy fervour, and the words שמע ישראל yet ring in our ears as they ascended on High to proclaim that you are yet true to the creed that was established in days of old, when the world was yet in its infancy, and mankind not yet enlightened in the paths of truth, and that you are not tired of the appellation of Israelites, but wish to preserve your race and its peculiar institutions, as far as in you lies, to the utmost age of the world. Do I interpret aright your hopes? your desires? your positive determination? I cannot be mistaken; it is the character of the remnant of Israel, it is the spirit which Moses foresaw would animate us, when he predicted that his song would never be forgotten from the mouth of the remotest descendants of Jacob. You are then here to declare your allegiance to your God, to devote yourselves to his service; and take you good heed that you fail not in your duty, that you do not pretermit anything which

can prove you to be a portion of God's people, his inheritance on earth.

But, beloved friends! we have lived to see a great change developing itself in our communities; ancient rites and usages have been violently attacked, or thrown aside as useless, and the conservators of the law have turned against it as its most violent enemies. Strife and disunion have shown themselves in many congregations, and the peace and concord, the conformity to our rules and the pious observances of our forefathers have in many places fallen into a lamentable decay. Impiety even has assumed the garb of holiness, and professes that all its deeds of horror have a pious object, to preserve our faith through its destruction. Perhaps you may think the present moment totally unsuited to such a discussion; you come hither to consecrate a house of God, and only words of joy should be heard, only messages of peace should be spoken. But yet, brethren, I speak of joy, though I allude to occurrences which are painful and mortifying; I utter words of peace, though I call upon you to buckle on the bright and burnished and well-tried armour of religion to do battle, bravely, in the holy fight for our God and his sanctuaries. There is a purity in our law, which it behoves us to feel; there is a peace which it imparts, which we ought to render our own portion. It is therefore I tell you of the dangers which you run in your intercourse with the world, and speak to you of enemies that assail your immortal hopes, though they come to you as friends of human rights, as the defenders of human reason. And it is by flattering human weakness; by railing against antiquated prejudices; by attacking all that

has come down from ages long past, that they endeavour to win followers, to acquire imitators; and could they succeed, which, God be praised, they cannot! there would soon be no synagogue wherein a Jew could worship, there would be no congregation which a Jew could join, there would be no deed of piety which he could perform in the community of the faithful; and soon the sun of righteousness would set forever, and the baleful sway of human passion, the unbridled impulses of human reason would speedily cover the earth with deeds of horror as with a deadly pall, and justice would flee affrighted to happier realms, and the earth would be rendered corrupt and ripe for destruction before the Merciful One who reigns in heaven. And do you remember the object for which this house was built at first? do you recall to mind the assemblies that were held here? have you forgotten the man who deified human reason within these walls? I blush to say that Israelites by name, and, I hope by feeling, were among those who laid the foundations of this house when its uses were so unhallowed, and I regret that week after week, on a day not known to our religion, there came hither men and women who are Jews by blood to listen to the rhapsodies of one who, whilst declaiming against the creed of the Nazarenes, among whom we live, levelled the arrows of his satire and unsound argumentation also against the ever-blessed Law* promul-

* The present Synagogue Rodef Sholem was originally built for the use of a *free* congregation. The notice in the text is sufficiently plain to require no farther elucidation. The congregation Rodef Sholem bought it, when the freemen failed to fill it, and have possessed it now just twenty years. August, '27.

gated at Sinai. I will do them the justice to believe that they may have thought that arguments, strong and unanswerable against the dogmas of the prevailing religion of the country, would tend as a defence of Judaism; but Israelites ought never to forget that they cannot be religious by denying what others hold sacred, but by being positively impressed with the truth of their own received doctrines, and by following up faithfully the duties which they are certified are demanded of them. Consequently there is the greatest danger to be dreaded from a constant listening to opinions, especially if they are enforced by the charms of eloquence, and a sort of special pleading which appeals to the innate strength of human reason, which opinions are in substance that man needs no guide except what is implanted in his own bosom; that all received views are merely the inventions of bygone days, and of no use or necessity for men of the present enlightened century. There is in truth not much danger that Israelites would ever adopt the Nazarene or Mahomedan doctrines from conviction, though I would not dispute that there may be some Jews who accept these or any other ideas, however absurd, because their mind may have received a bent in a direction not easily accounted for; but as a general truth, we may state that Jews are not likely to be converted to religions other than their own. The case however is more serious with respect to indifference to all religions. Man is but too apt to overvalue the small portion of intellect which the Lord has assigned to him; he is only too prone to vaunt unduly of the glimpses, and they are but glimpses, which he has taken in the widely-extended field of science;

and straightway he imagines that he knows enough, more than enough to guide himself securely on the intricate path of life, and he heeds not the admonition which his parents address to him, and he turns a deaf ear to the instructions of his spiritual guides. Especially is this the case with many Israelites of the present day; they have at length been aroused from a long mental sleep in which oppression had cast their fathers; and, intoxicated with the new draughts of science, after awakening from their slumber of centuries in duration, they imagine *themselves* equal to solve all the difficult problems of life, and no longer under the necessity of the least, even *divine*, direction and control. Their fathers, they say, were men of darkness, stationary, and opposed to progress, simply because they knew nothing of science and classical literature; but that, for the very reason that the present age is one wherein sciences and literature have become incorporated in our being, we may safely dispense with revelation even, that too having lost its potency and use. Is it not evident, therefore, brethren, that the preacher of infidelity, who absolves his hearers from religious obligations, is far more likely to find followers among those Jews whose moral self-government has already been shaken by the whisperings of egotism and self-congratulation, than the teachers of those creeds which demand faith and submission to received dogmas, which are not asserted to be emanations from human reason, this modern golden calf, which has so many worshippers from among all sorts of men? Now imagine one who has a smattering of sciences, of foreign languages, of a certain species of refinement which was foreign to his

forefathers, coming into an assembly before whom stands one chosen for his eloquence, descanting week after week upon the rights of absolute freedom of conscience, of the paramount privileges of human intellect: and do you not think that he will be strongly appealed to to forsake the religion of his *ignorant* fathers, as he deems them to have been, to bask at pleasure in the newly-discovered mental freedom, which holds out so many golden hopes of liberation from all that can burden life with fetters, which are said to enslave reason and trammel the will? And though such a one does not apostatize to the churches of the Nazarenes or Ishmaelites, can he be called a child of Israel? He neglects the Sabbath, he eats the flesh of the swine, he takes for wife the daughter of the stranger, his children are uncircumcised in the flesh, and horror upon horror, in his hour of death he calls not on his Father in heaven, and he refuses to subdue his heart before the Creator of the world. What then is his nominal adherence worth to us, nay to himself?

Against these dangers I warn you, against such doctrines which produce these results and their teachers be ye guarded, so that your feet may be firm in the way wherein the Lord bids you walk all the days that you live on the earth. And let it be your constant care to distinguish between good and evil, not by unaided human reason, but by the light of revelation, that revelation which has shone so brilliantly on the wide atmosphere of moral existence ever since it was first cast thither from the mighty hand of the living God, to give light to the children of man in their search for truth, that they may travel securely

on the road assigned them by Him, their Creator, in the brightness of worldly prosperity, and the gloom of sorrow and tribulation. Much may be said to you of the triumphs of human reason, of the march of intellect, of the progress of improvement; but, as you value your salvation, be cautious how you let the least impression be made upon you by such general assertions. Do not believe when you are told that Judaism is in any danger from within or without; and that hence there will be no blame attachable to any one for quitting an institution so little able to sustain itself against its enemies, which are confessedly so numerous and becoming daily more so. For despite of these apparent dangers, despite of these enemies, it will assuredly prove itself again victorious. It has met with such evils, and even greater ones, again and again: and how is it with the welfare of our belief? Yes, watchman, what of the night? is there all gloom before thee? total darkness? is there not one streak of light in the east, not one reddish tint to betoken the approach of day? But there is ample field for hope, there is a certainty of a change; "for the portion of the Lord is his people;" we were made thus only through our religion; and will He let that perish which He himself has established? shall that light be quenched which He himself has kindled? Never,—never!—but his institution will stand unshaken, and his light will never be extinguished. Those, therefore, who are a part of the remnant of his inheritance, descendants of those who sealed their sincerity amidst the rushing floods or the hissing flames: in short, you and I, the congregations and their ministers, the sage and the matron, the youth and the maiden—all, all—

have an interest in the legacy which is ours, and we should watch over it that it meet with no injury from the rude hands of opponents, if we can by our exertions prevent it, and to labour incessantly that others may be drawn into our fellowship, and become like us heirs of salvation.

It was once said, as I was told, within this house, before it was dedicated to the God of Israel, by the man who here endeavoured to scatter his poisonous seed, that the Mosaic religion was like a scaffolding reared up before the temple of reason, on which the builders were engaged in finishing their work. He averred that it had well answered its purpose; but now that, as the temple is finished, it is necessary to remove the unsightly scaffolding to exhibit the temple in its beauty, sublimity, and purity, to the admiring gaze of the millions.—A hearer, enraptured as she was by what she thought so true and beautifully expressed, reported to me the words in a foreign tongue, the sonorous language of the German's fatherland, whence so many of us have emigrated into this distant home, where freedom of conscience and security in the pursuit of happiness are the boon of the humblest inhabitant. The man who spoke the words also had come over the wide ocean from that land, whence much good and much that is evil in morals and religion have reached these shores. The words were too remarkable to be soon forgotten by a follower of Moses; and I recall them to-day merely to show the singular connexion there exists in the events of life, and how strangely the Almighty shapes every thing for a wise end. This structure was erected to deify human reason; here was unfurled a banner which

bore a device of defiance against all revelation; and here it was declared that the law of Moses was a mere preparation for a brighter development, a something better than the instruction derived from God. The creature called reason should alone decide, should alone be arbitrator in all that relates to moral opinions and actions; and Israelites and gentiles were alike invited to mingle as one people under the folds of this banner, and to forget what both had been taught, and to bury here all their prejudices in the common grave of past errors. It sounded well in the hearing of many; a brotherhood of mankind, a universality of human freedom based on their intellect; it was sublime, it was enchanting. Only one thing was forgotten, and that is, that we are God's chosen race, chosen not to grant us favour, and wisdom, and wealth; but that we might become by slow, yet sure, degrees the moral reformers of the world, and *to enlighten human reason upon the principles of the divine wisdom* intrusted to our care. But if we must needs preserve this power of enlightening, we can only accomplish this our destiny in one way, in one way solely, I maintain, that is by retaining our identity, remaining as we have been, not by surrendering our portion as the common stock of mankind, nor by adopting something else from them, any new or old invention which they may offer us instead of our faith. Yes, we expect a union of all men under the one standard; but it is not that of reason, untaught by the Lord, but that of the law of Moses, planted immovably in the heart of the rock of Horeb, whence its folds flutter to this day with every breeze that is wafted to the four corners of the earth. It is indeed

the triumph of reason for which we long and pray; but then it will be reason illuminated and made perfect by the inspiration of the Lord of the universe, He who framed our body from the dust of the earth, and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, through which we were rendered intelligent; and though this also constituted us free agents, we were likewise made responsible for all the deeds we may accomplish during our sojourn in the world. And thus it has occurred this day, that those who thought to have found in this house a foothold for the untaught intellect of man, have quitted its precincts, and the shouts which deified their own will no longer are heard within these walls. And you have come hither, brothers in Israel! with the transcripts of the Code of Moses in the language of the ancient Hebrews, and with volumes filled with nothing else than the laws and statutes which were laid before the sons of Jacob, by their great teacher who so well fulfilled his mission to them. And ye are here present this day in a house devoted to the Lord God, the Sovereign of the universe, and you profess yourselves believers in the truth of his holy word, and you say that you have full faith in its permanence, and that you are to this day bound by all that it contains. You have felt that your religion is something more than a mere scaffolding to rear thereby another structure, be this one of reason, or a belief in another creed which requires a messenger of divine truths other than Moses, or a redeemer other than the great God of Israel, who WAS, who IS, and who WILL BE. You are here to declare that your own intelligence is not enough to guide you aright, but that you wish to be taught by

the omnipotent Teacher who enlightened your forefathers, whose words are words of fire, whose precepts are the lamp to eternal happiness. And well do you act to desire this instruction; and behold it is not far from you, it is not over the sea, nor in the high realms of heaven; but in yonder ark is the treasure found; it is literally within your hearts, within your mouths, that you may fulfil it.

Do you now understand what is the import of the words, "We dedicate this house to the God of Israel?" You do, I am certain; but permit me to give tongue to your thoughts, and sure I am that you will respond to all that I can say. You know of no One in heaven and on earth, in times past, present, and future, to whom worship is due, but the Most High One who chose Abraham in making a covenant of everlasting with him and his seed, who confirmed his oath unto Isaac, and who established it with Jacob as a statute for Israel, unto all eternity. Him you have followed out of Egypt; Him you have heard on Horeb; Him you have worshipped in Palestine; Him you have found a beneficent Father and a righteous Judge; Him also you have found a sure Protector, inasmuch as with all your sorrows you have never been consumed. And you know that the religion which is yours is derived from his intelligence, it is the portion which the Godhead delivered unto you, through which means you are rendered his inheritance; and you feel that by obeying it you obey his will, and that if found worthy you will obtain his approbation, without the necessity of any aid from any other source. And, therefore, do you devote this house to Him, who is the universal God, the Creator of all flesh, the Lord

of all spirits; but who permits you to call Him by your own name, as the national God of Israel, and henceforth his Name is to be invoked here, and here is his word to be proclaimed to those who thirst not for water, nor are hungry for food, but who pant for instruction, to certify unto them how they are to serve the Lord. Here the mourner and the helpless are to appear to crave aid and mercy; here the one escaped from danger is to resort to return thanks in the midst of the faithful; and hither too should come those who are happy, and joyful, whose storehouse is filled with plenty, and whose children grow up around them like the vigorous trees of the forest, to confess their indebtedness to the Bestower of all good, who has blessed them more than they deserve, who has heaped benefits on them which their deeds do not merit. Here all are to recognize the same God as the Source of all that is dispensed, be this good, be this evil; and here all are to seek a remedy for their troubles, or to pour out their hearts in prayer and praise at the shrine of the One whose power is unlimited, and whose hand is still stretched out to punish and to save, to slay, and to call again unto life.

Now rejoice, the work is done, and this place is called by the name of your God; you have fulfilled one duty in having procured a suitable house wherein to offer your orisons, the sacrifices of your lips. But take heed, that your work of to-day may not ascend against you as an accusing angel, and demand vengeance on you for not being diligent in the services of God. It is not enough that you have ample room for many worshippers, whilst the benches are empty, and the seats deserted. It is not enough that you

have a fine place of worship, whilst on the Sabbaths and festivals your resorts of business are thronged by those whose presence is demanded here. It is not enough that your synagogue exhibits the beauty of holiness, whilst in your private life you are not holy unto your God. But let me entreat you to be consistent Israelites; be not one thing in profession and another in practice; take heed that your honoured name become not a reproach through your own misdeeds; but let your acts appeal to your Father in heaven for his blessing, and let men of other persuasions see that you feel your high destiny, that you know the full import of being called children of the Lord, the first-born of grace, the heirs of immortal happiness. Thus only can you live before the Lord, and be accepted in his presence, and thus only can you in your own persons justify the words of our text, that "God's portion is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance."—And may He who blessed our fathers, bless you all with his spirit, and inscribe you in the book of life, so that you may live in peace on earth, and be blessed with eternal felicity hereafter. Amen.

Elul 27th. } 5607.
Sept. 8th. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

REGENERATION.

No. II.

O God of salvation and forgiveness! look down from the seat of thy holiness, and pardon the transgressions of thy servants in answer to their prayers. But not in wrath do Thou, Holy One! come to judge us, for our guilt is before our eyes, and not according to thy goodness have we acted towards Thee; for in the same measure as Thou hast removed our burdens, have we risen in rebellion against thy will and law, and followed the evil inclinations of our heart, whereby we have violated thy precepts, and shown ourselves unworthy of the name which we bear. Still let us entreat Thee, to let thy hand fall lightly when it is stretched out to strike the sinners, and let each blow be so directed that it may appeal to the obdurate heart, and teach it to seek for enlargement and safety under thy good providence, wherewith Thou watchest over the affairs of mankind, and directest them to the ultimate happiness of all thy creatures. And O, that we might be permitted to see righteousness flourish on all the earth, and especially in our midst; that the number of the transgressors might be diminished, and that those who worship Thee in truth increase and multiply daily and hourly; in order that we might be blessed with the evidence of thy favour, which is always displayed when thy chil-

dren obey thy voice, and be endowed with the assurance of thy peace and grace, which are a light to salvation and everlasting happiness. Amen.

BRETHREN!

The Scriptures contain many words of consolation; but none are more comforting than those which assure us that the wrath of God is not everlasting, and that the sinner can obtain again the mercy which he has forfeited through means of a voluntary return to righteousness. And thus speaks the Lord through Ezekiel the prophet (xviii. 26):

ובשוב הרשע מרשעתו אשר עשה ויעש משפט
וצדקה הוא את נפשו יחיה : יחזק' יח' כו' :

"Again when the wicked turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doth what is lawful and right, he will preserve his soul alive."

In our hurried manner of judging of the events of life, we are very apt to claim for ourselves a species of blamelessness, as though we are always the creatures of circumstances which compel us to act in a certain way, and leave us no liberty of motion and action. If we may be believed, we love righteousness sincerely and ardently, and we only transgress, either through the force of circumstances, our position in society, the defects of education, ill health, multiplicity of engagements, and whatever else the excuses may be, which we so aptly apply to drown the voice of conscience, when it, in the moments of occasional wakefulness, accuses us with our imperfections, and brings before us the evidences of our

guilt.—Now it is certainly true, that circumstances have a very powerful influence over us, and that they to a great extent prompt our actions. But it is not true that we are entirely dependent upon things without us, or that they can be pleaded as a complete justification for our course of life. In the first place circumstances may be viewed as the providential indication of our intended plan of life, the limitation of the sphere in which we are to move and act. If we, for instance, happen to be born of rich parents, of persons in an elevated walk of life, we are surely in a very different position from that we would be if our first breath were drawn in the abodes of wretchedness, where the morning dawns without a morsel of food to put before the half-naked little ones, shivering in a fireless room, whilst the chill blast of fierce winter enters through many a chink in the cracked walls, which offer no adequate resistance to its fury; from that if our earliest recollections should carry us back to scenes of strife and debauchery, to ignorance and its concomitant crimes. In the one case the mind will run back to a smiling innocence of infant years, in the other to the dreary picture which so checks in the young all aspiration for what is pleasant and beautiful. There is therefore a marked distinction in the *start* which individuals placed in these respective ranks have in the race of life: the one is encouraged by all the soft attractions of ease, refinement, and luxury; the other is repelled by the struggles, the coarseness, the penury of his lowly condition; the one has a path ready broken and levelled, all he needs to do is to advance; the other has to battle against adversity in every step he takes, and has not only to

seek the road which leads onward, but has to force for himself a narrow passage on which he may push forward amidst the eager crowd, in whose way the new aspirant stands. But having stated this, we have assigned all the advantages to a pleasant commencement which it can claim; for beyond this neither wealth, nor position, nor education can help any one; all the gifts we receive are properly speaking means for progress, not the perfection of human happiness; and therefore it is merely the proper use of our position, not the position itself which, of right, stamps our character with honour, and places us in the front ranks of society. It is therefore true that the man whose origin is low, I use the word designedly as expressing something positively deleterious, not merely humble, who in infancy was surrounded with the debasing influences of immorality and vulgar associates, has a natural incentive presented to him to become like his companions, and parents, if you include them also, low, debased, and vulgar. But this is not the case of necessity, or in other words, he is not irresistibly drawn to a course of vice, through the defects of his position; for he is enabled by the spirit which his Creator has implanted in him to rise superior to circumstances, to discard his wicked companions, to become industrious and frugal; to accumulate property, and what is more, to acquire a character for probity and moral worth, and a position among the pious, so that he can be well satisfied with the humbleness of his descent and the lowness of his original condition.

We may state as an incontrovertible truth, that

wealth is not always destined for the sons of the rich; nor is respectability universally the property of the educated and high-born solely. The offspring of indigence may rise to be the merchant-princes of the land, and the humblest may ascend to the pinnacles of renown, unapproached by those who once despised their mean origin. Because the Almighty, in the equal distribution of his gifts, has not overlooked the lowly-placed; and commensurate with their trials has He given them talent, energy, and perseverance, through which means things deemed almost impossibilities may often be accomplished. Search then the annals of the world, and you will find precisely the children of poverty, men whose pedigree was unknown to themselves almost, occupy the most conspicuous positions, and contributing to the developments of the mind which, without their co-operation would, to all appearance, have been greatly retarded. People speak often contemptuously of these new men, of these mushrooms of the day, whom nobody heard of before, whose parents were common labourers, mendicants, or even criminals; but these and the like observations do not derogate in the slightest degree from their eminence, or diminish by aught the measure of their merit.

In the above I have not dealt with fancies, but merely recited to you facts, of which you can all find a verification in your own experience. Now what does this prove to us, so far as morals and religion are concerned? Simply this, that no man is born to be irretrievably wicked, and that there exists no moral force which restrains any one to persevere in a course of crime, though his earliest recollections carry

him back only to a concourse of wicked and depraved characters. Some indeed tell us, that there are in certain large communities and in many lonely and distant settlements what may be termed schools of vice, where no sound of a religious word arouses the conscience, where profanity and excesses are practised without restraint, and where robbery and violence are enforced as a branch of education, and the most expert acts in defiance of law and good order are applauded as deeds meriting the highest praise. That children reared under such influences should be almost foredoomed to a vicious life is evident enough; for their conscience remains a blank, an unimpressed capacity, without any active power for development, simply because the motives of activity are entirely absent. Still this does not say that the *ability* to improve is denied to such unfortunates even, and that, should virtuous men step forward and snatch many such a brand from the midst of the burning, they might rescue all, on whom their labours of love are bestowed, from the degradation to which they seem destined by their wretched position. Only let the light of reason illumine these living caverns of corruption, and they must naturally be changed at least from the perfect corpse-like state to that of a partial animation; and thus may a better and holier spirit be gradually breathed into them, and they will arise on their feet and stand upright, like one awakened from the dead, and live. I have assumed the worst state possible of society, where evil is positively taught and regarded as a virtue, if this be at all possible, of which however we can hardly form a conception, for the picture is too horrible to be readily real-

ized;* and still upon investigation it will be found that the moral force is only buried up beneath heaps of corruption, not extinguished, however, but ready to start into activity so soon as it is left free to develop itself. In other words, we come to the conclusion that absolute depravity, or an entire inability to appreciate virtue, is a thing not to be imagined; and hence no one will censure the philanthropist who seeks in the abodes of vice for objects on which to exert his benevolent efforts of regeneration, and accuse him of a want of common sense, or deem him in the least irrational for believing that of such bad materials even any good can be elaborated.

Let us apply these general principles to the doctrine of repentance and regeneration as developed in our Scriptures. The call to righteousness, you will find, is uniform and universal; there is no reservation for those lowly born, for those who have been badly educated, or those who have been corrupted by early wicked associates. For what are the words of the Decalogue? "For I, the Lord thy God, am a watchful God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third generation, and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me," which words "who hate me" are correctly explained by your wise men, "When the children follow the example of their fathers," which then teaches that to the wicked only will ancestral delinquency be retributed, not to those who forsake the path of death and choose life. There must therefore be a right to expect a love

* Still it is said to be true, as the annals of wickedness and the records of police courts are said to have revealed in large towns especially.

for God even among the descendants of his enemies, which term includes all who hate righteousness and pursue the evil. And how can such a right exist if there could be a single human being who is incapable of reform? who is so much the slave of circumstances as to feel no pleasure whatever in virtue, no delight except in crime? It may be that the height to which the son of the ungodly will be able to rise, is limited by his education; granted; but this does not say, that all improvement is impossible to him: and how do we know in what estimation the Lord may hold the partial self-regeneration of the son of the sinner? who knows but that the little he accomplishes may be accounted of higher value, than the great acts of the one who has always been trained to obedience? whose earliest lisping was exercised in repeating the truth of religion? We mortals can only judge from the outside of a substance, from the mere surface of passing events; whereas the Searcher of hearts knows all the secrets of the soul; He beholds the struggles which even the smallest amendment requires; the obstacles which a course of sin places in the way of amendment; and hence He will doubtless regard with favour the sincerity of the attempted reform, though it fail of reaching its full development through the defect of human nature, and the want of knowledge which the sinner may have of the full extent of his duty.

You will observe, brethren, that I put the worst cases, the most unlikely to produce a reformation; and still we see that amendment is not impossible, and that it is required by the Lord, with a threatening of condign visitation, if the demand be not satis-

fied. No one should therefore say: "I violate the Sabbath, because my father violated it before me." True, the example was bad, perhaps there may have been compulsion employed to induce the son to labour; but so soon as he has learned his duty, so soon as he can bid defiance to a wicked father's tyranny, the law speaks to him authoritatively: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." No one should say: "In my father's house forbidden food was put on the table; they taught me there to partake of whatever food pleased the palate without regard to the prohibitions of the Mosaic Law." For he should remember that the knowledge which he has received of the will of God in this respect, testifies unto him that the conduct of his parents was unjustifiable, and that he is bound to listen to the voice of the Eternal, the Parent of all mankind, to the exclusion of that of an earthly father and mother, whose breath is a mere loan, resumable at pleasure by the Holy One who bestowed it on them. Men do not plead old fashions as an excuse for wearing antiquated garments, or being conveyed in carriages of an inconvenient form, because their grandparents so appeared in public, and because they saw such things before them in their infancy. And still when religion is in question, men have a ready excuse that they have not been taught better, they only follow the example of their predecessors. But how supremely ridiculous is such an excuse from the mouth of a professed believer! If you are infidels, if you believe your own reason sufficient for your guidance; if you do not put full faith in the truth of revelation; if you imagine, but O, how vain! that there is no responsibility in the grave

whither you are going: then there may be a shadow of a shadow for defending sin on the plea of the example of others. But for a believer, who confides sincerely in the instruction of his God, who justly deems the word of the Lord the only sure guide in the duties of life, who is firmly convinced that he must stand in judgment before the Most Holy Judge, who knows the secrets of every bosom, and who forgets not any act though it be wrought in the darkness of concealment—for such a one to say, he sins because his father sinned before him, is indeed incomprehensible, and we may well say, How much is this one braving the wrath of God! He does not plead ignorance, he does not advance the lack of opportunity,—only that he was originally placed in circumstances unfavorable to religion. Yet how can this single fact have all the force he claims from it, to excuse him for neglecting what he knows to be contrary to his own conviction? what he deems to be a violation of the sacred duty which his religion demands of him?—Perhaps he may be disposed to enter upon the exercises of the law as one enters a market-house furnished with many delicacies, with a variety of fruits and vegetables, from which he chooses what pleases his taste, and rejects those things which do not suit his fancy. Thus indeed we see many a one making a religion of his own; permitting himself much or little which to others is interdicted, and proceeding with the most sacred concern of life as one would do with any earthly, or mere human thing, unawed by its sanctity, unterrified by the threats of its Supreme Bestower. But this again is irrational, unworthy especially of those whose mind

has drunk in the streams of knowledge and mental enlightenment. No proposition is truer, than that the whole law is either true or false. There is no limit, no definite line behind which we can range the different precepts, and then declare the one part to be in force, the other to be useless. Through the whole Pentateuch, our only standard of duty, it is nearly everywhere said, "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying," &c.; the phraseology is everywhere the same wherever the context permits it, and the other few deviations will be found to be so merely in form, not in substance. And what does all this prove? but that so far as internal evidence is concerned, there is no distinction to be drawn between precept and precept; all are alike binding, seeing that they are all based on the selfsame authority: consequently there can exist no valid reason for observing the one at the expense of the other, or for deeming some commandments pre-eminently holy more than the rest, as is done by so many who pretend to piety, but who are deficient in the great essential of *humility;* inasmuch as they place their own judgment above the declared will of God.

We are thus commanded to love God, to be the friends of our Creator, though our fathers hated Him and were his enemies. As already said in the verse which we quoted from the Decalogue, there is vengeance threatened against the sons of the sinner who follow him in his wickedness. But our text says: "When the wicked turneth away from his wickedness, he will preserve his soul alive." So then it is contemplated that life shall be given to any one who, learning to hate his previous conduct, turns away

therefrom, and does what is lawful and right. It matters not therefore how the evil course was contracted, whether through the example of the parent, or one's own impulse and inclination for the pleasant vices which are at times so attractive in their exterior, yet so destructive in the bitter fruits of death which they produce: all the wicked are invited to ask for life of the soul, and they are promised the certainty of attaining it. And the prophet justifies this merciful dispensation; because the Lord would judge each of the house of Israel according to his own ways, irrespective of the actions or advice of any other human being; because the responsibility of obedience is imposed upon all men alike, according to the opportunities which are given them; but no one is exempt from duty, and no one is permitted to do what is absolutely wrong. It must therefore be actually possible for each one of us to amend his course, since the Almighty can ask nothing from man which he cannot accomplish; it must be that no one is placed so low in the scale of humanity, but that he has some means of acquiring a degree, ever so slight even, of godliness; and thus the law has a just claim upon all the children of Israel, that they should observe its precepts and act accordingly. No one in his slothfulness can rest his claims for mercy upon the righteousness of his father; no one can appeal to his father's sin for an extenuation of his own guilt. No one can ever claim to have done enough, and at any portion of his life forsake the ways of piety, and disregard the duties and obligations of his faith. But every son of Israel should direct his inquiry to the pages of the law of his God, and, learning what is

there required, act up to that alone, and look for mercy solely by striving incessantly to omit nothing on his part, by which, humble mortal though he is, he may deserve that favour which the Bible promises to the simple in faith, to the sincere follower of the Lord. Let no one continue in his course of sin under the infatuation that he is born to a sinner's fate, that he has no power within himself to turn from iniquity; for if this were so, then would the Ten Commandments not denounce punishment against the enemies of God; and we are his enemies, whilst we rebel against his declared will. There is an element of sin implanted in our heart; the antagonizing principle, however, also is deeply seated there, and has a tenfold greater power; since it is able to overcome the other altogether, whilst the principle of evil, however gratified by repeated indulgence, fails of obtaining the complete mastery over virtue; and this is proved by the agony which the most degraded, the least educated criminal experiences in the presence of the righteous; he feels self-abashed, although he may not have sufficient knowledge to arrive at the perfection which he admires in others, for having so entirely failed in ennobling his character through those deeds which adorn the lives of the good. And then we have ample experience to prove that, through such a feeling of contrition, a new desire for virtue was often awakened, and that, it being thus awakened, it led the unfortunate to seek for instruction, and then he loved to practise what he so late acquired.

Indeed the gates of repentance are never closed; the power of the Merciful One is extended to save all who call on Him for aid and mercy. The beginning,

however, must come from us, as the prophet says: "Cast away from yourselves all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" We must acknowledge our guilt, condemn sincerely our conduct, throw away as it were from us all our transgressions; and then commence a new system of life, as though we had a new heart and a new soul, not those which formerly thought on sin and delighted in iniquity, but such as reflect only on serving God and find the highest pleasure in yielding obedience to his decrees. If then we commence, it matters not what our state of life may be, what our education may have been: we have a well-founded assurance that we have rent asunder the decree of death recorded against us, and we shall have life, ay, the life of the soul, which life is not quenched in death, and terminates not within the grave.—This blissful assurance was announced to us in the days of Ezekiel; but it also applies to our time, to us who are here this day. O let the call arouse you, brethren, to a sincere reflection; investigate wherein you have sinned, exculpate not your misdeeds by the force of circumstances or the allurement of example; but accuse yourselves of every transgression against the Law of which you are cognizant, and endeavour to avoid in future the recurrences of the same sins. So shall your prayers be heard on High, and the approaching Day of Atonement be in truth one of forgiveness of sin, and you will be rendered indeed clean before the Lord, as you desire. Amen.

Tishry 7th. } 5608.
Sept'r 17th. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE CREATION.

No. II.

Unto Thee, O Father and King! will all flesh and spirit come, and every knee will bend before the radiance of thy glory; for in all the world, and from eternity to eternity, art Thou the Sovereign and Protector of all that exists. And whenever, therefore, we are afflicted we fly to Thee for aid, and to thy Name we run as to a tower of strength, where we may be shielded from the arrows of adversity which are scattered over the earth, to try and to purify the children of men, that they may be freed from iniquity, and rendered clean through the tribulations which teach them to seek Thee, and to invoke Thee as their Saviour and Deliverer. Be it then thy will, O beneficent Father! to enlighten our eyes in thy law, and to let us see the end of our being on earth, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom, and strive to serve Thee in truth; so that we may shun iniquity, and only do that which is pleasing in thy eyes. So shall our days flow on in peace, and we be known as those who have found favour in thy eyes, which favour is life everlasting, happiness without end, light without darkness. Amen.

Brethren!

There is but one single principle which can of

right be regarded by all persons as the foundation of Judaism, and this is the existence of one God, from whom all has sprung, and this we are told in the first words of Scripture:

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ :
בר׳ א׳ א׳ :

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Gen. i. 1.

This means that the first origin of matter, not less than its arrangement, the production of the stuff from which heaven and earth are made, is the work of the Being here called God, אלהים or the One in whom all the powers perceivable any where and every where are centred, and from whom in consequence all powers, faculties, and capacities are derived. He is the Origin,—every thing else the product; He is the Bestower,—every one else the recipient. The Bible, therefore, in the narrative of the creation, does not so much give a consecutive account of how the organization of the universe took place, although this also is done in the first chapter of Genesis, as to exhibit the agency through which the mighty structure in its vastness and its details was brought forth, and this agency was the creative word of the Most High; as the Psalmist says: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his lips all their host." (Psalm xxxiii. 6.) There is, let me remark in passing, a great error, of which many are heedlessly guilty, that is of regarding the Bible primarily as a mere history, or as a philosophical exposition of the causes of the events recorded there;

whereas in truth this cannot be the aim of our Scriptures, inasmuch as for the one purpose the details are not sufficiently ample; and for the other, the minute points on which to form a judgment are omitted. Yet it is not on this account to be supposed that our Bible contradicts history or enforces unphilosophical conclusions; we only say that its value does not depend upon these considerations, which nevertheless have so often been looked for, and this not always with full satisfaction by many who have studied the word of God with improper ideas respecting its nature and tendency. In modern times, accordingly, there have arisen men who profess to account for the age of the world in a different manner from what they fancy is laid down in the book of Genesis, and they aver that it required many centuries, many thousands of years, for the crust of the earth to assume its present shape, and for the consolidation of the rocks and mountains and the other formations which present themselves on the surface of the globe. And if the small part of creation on which we live required so long a time, how old then must all the vast universe be; since our earth is scarcely the size of a single grain of sand in comparison with the thousands on thousands of worlds which revolve on every side around us. But that the creation is not confined to the earth, and that this is not the centre of all the stars in the skies, and that these are not a fixed sort of a tent stretched out for the habitation of the sun and moon and the starry host of the night, is not a discovery of modern philosophers only, but has long since been felt and expressed by those writers who have transmitted to us the Scriptures of the Lord, and also by their followers,

who justly estimated their own insignificance in the scale of beings by their littleness, when compared with the immensity of matter of which they formed but a mere speck, not recognizable to the most painful search in the totality of things. They knew that their earth was but a minute portion of all the many mighty worlds which the Creator has cast abroad; and still they felt that, with all this comparative smallness of their globe, and with the absolute insignificance of their own bodies on the earth, they were the objects of providential care, of a watchfulness which is not fatigued by the survey of dominions of such vast extent, nor wearied by the inspection of the minuter particles which form the aggregate of the entire whole.—"The Lord's are the earth and what filleth it, the world and its inhabitants," thus they thought, and they therefore confided in his instruction; and though they knew the sun to be vast, though they felt assured that in the constellations on high they beheld worlds piled upon worlds: they did not for that reason doubt that they themselves proceeded from the same Source, and that the same Power had called them into being. In this light merely must we accordingly regard the account of the creation, as an indication that the whole universe of which we can form an idea was and is the work of God, the Almighty, who is here announced as the Creator. It matters not in this view whether before the earth and the present outward structure of things were organized, God had created the original matter many centuries antecedently; nor that it may take ages, not days, for the rocks to rise above the surface of the water, and to become by degrees hardened to

their present consistency; nor that the mountains are not a uniform structure, but contain remains of animals and plants long since vanished from the earth; nor that originally what is now dry land must have been a reservoir of water, or been the bed of mighty torrents rolling along in their fury masses of stone and banks of earth: all this does not in the least contradict the assertion of the text, which informs us that "God created in the beginning the heavens and the earth," that He originated the elements, and assigned to them their power of action, limited their sphere and controlled their progress. The more you assume that only simple elements were originally sent forth; the more you insist that all we see and know of is reducible to so limited a number of original substances, that a child can write them down: the more you magnify the power of the Most High, that He from so few means of combination produced the immense variety of worlds, of suns, of beings, of animals, of vegetables, of minerals, all so varied, all so distinct in their nature,* qualities, and powers; especially as with all the knowledge mankind have hitherto obtained of the mechanism of organized things, they have failed to imitate in a solitary instance a single object of the vast variety of substances, and giving to any of their products the least semblance of life and voluntary motion, or the power of reproduction. With all our knowledge we are only able

* This holds good even in substances where the chemist finds the same identical elements, but yet exhibiting different qualities, owing to the presence in different quantities, probably, of the imponderable forces, such as light, heat, electricity, or whatever has yet escaped human search.

to dissolve, to disconnect, to combine, to change; and where we leave a product of our own, there we shall find it again, unincreased, and unimproved by time or circumstance, but perhaps transformed through its own want of cohesion, or dissolved by the incongruity of the elements in our combining. It is accordingly the province of the Creator himself alone to fix on a permanent footing what He elaborates; since with Him there is no conceivable want of knowledge of the nature of his elements, nor of the means to place them in harmony with each other, and to preserve the equilibrium between them and cognate substances.

But it is by no means certain that it was necessary for God to submit to a progress in his creation; or that He required time, like a chemist, to see his products, so to say, ripening under his supervision, before they could assume the necessary form or could crystallize by slow degrees in definite shapes and proportions. This is talking of Him as of a human being; this is placing the Creator upon the same level with his creatures: these exist in the space and the limit of time set by Him, their Author; but is He, the unlimited and illimitable, to be thought of in this light? is not He who produces all able to call it forth in an instant of time, and to destroy it again at his pleasure?—The Bible says: "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" meaning, when first the matter which now forms our earth was made, it was a confused mass of all the elements which constitute it, without form, without divisions, without light. It was mixed, and cold, and dark, in a manner of which we can form no conception, since we lack the ele-

ments of comparison. This was on the first day of creation. How long this state of things may have lasted the text gives us no farther insight of than by ending "and it was evening and it was morning the first day." But it does not distinctly declare that the state of the beginning, the ראשית (Reshith), might not have preceded the formation of light for many long and dreary years, in which, for all we know, a slow process of gradual and beneficent change may have been wrought by the Creator, so as to prepare the incoherent mass for the habitation of living things. So also it is said, "And the spirit of God was moving (more correctly, hovering, waving, or fluttering,) on the surface of the water." There was, we may explain, the mass of earthy and watery particles thrown out into space, uncongenial and cold, dead to all purposes and in appearance; nevertheless it was subject to an influence which gathered into one the harmonizing principles, and separated those which had peculiar tendencies into different classes; "the spirit of God," as it is figuratively called in the Bible, was moving to and fro on the surface of the undivided fluids, to work upon them and through them the changes which unsearchable Wisdom had at first contemplated. Though we have assumed in this manner that this state of transition may have lasted a long period, it is by no means certain that this must have been so; for there is nothing to prevent the Deity from accomplishing the creation of chaos and its organization in the same day, such a day as ours, consisting of a period from sunrise to sunrise, although the sun at that period was not yet assigned as the luminary of our globe. We forget, in speaking of

God, that the subject of our discourse is the כל יכול the All-sufficient, who no sooner wills than He executes, who no sooner desires than his desires are fulfilled. To us the transition appears too rapid, too precipitate, too unexpected; but this does not circumscribe Him within our range, does not abridge his power or render unreasonable his wisdom.—The changes which we discover on the earth may have, moreover, sprung from another circumstance,—from the great flood, which at a later period was sent over the whole surface of the habitable globe, when the landmarks between dry land and ocean were obliterated, when the course of the rivers was not recognizable amidst the vast extent of the treeless sea, the heaving of billows without a shore to break their force. Who can tell that in that dread year, when all which lived on the dry land perished, except the few that had been safely harboured in the ark with Noah, all the changes which now puzzle the inquirer may have not taken place? who will assure us that in that fearful convulsion of nature rocks may not have been softened, and whole tribes of animals and plants found their graves in the bowels of the granite mountains, or deep in the fields of clay or sand? who can tell us what influences were called forth by the Creator to produce the universal flood, of which we now can scarcely form the smallest idea? and who can precisely inform us what powers were afterwards called forth again to dry up the earth, that it might once more be fitted for the habitation of mankind?—You will see that all speculation on this subject is but painful uncertainty, and all attempts to fix the age of the earth from the appearance of its strata is at best

only labouring in the darkness, a mere hypothesis without the least approach to certainty.

Now, I do not contend that the Scriptures do not assert that the world was organized in six days; they certainly teach this in so many words; but it is also clear either that the *beginning* may have endured a considerable period, and that this season of transition may have been sufficient to produce all the phenomena which we see traced around us, or that, if so it pleased the Creator, six simple days were enough to create and arrange all matter, and all beings which owe their existence to Him; since, as we have said, to will with Him is to execute, to think is sufficient to establish whatever is his desire. We need not therefore tremble at the assertion of geologists, that they have found a contradiction between revelation and science; for, admitting that to man if he had made the earth slow progress would have been required, to God it would be folly to assign any such a necessity; the term outside force is not applicable to Him, for the very idea of such a state would argue a deficiency on his part, and a superiority in some higher unknown power to coërce and limit Him; and who could be this power beyond the sole Author of all?—where should He find one that could control Him, and tell Him: "Thus far and no farther shalt Thou proceed?" Time and space are to Him no assignable limits, and what to us appears infinity and eternity is with Him but the beginning of power and existence. It is true that so far as we can discover, in all his workings in nature He employs natural means, or rather those principles implanted by Him within his system of the world, to work out the ends He purposes establishing; but this

does not say that in the commencement of things He was bound to institute those laws of nature which now operate, or to proceed in conformity with the views of a modern philosopher, who would assert that to produce slate, for example, should require so many years; to form stone, coal, or marble, or chalk, or anything else, would demand so many more years. Perhaps he may be right, that under certain circumstances the precise time indicated would be absolutely consumed; for instance, if he had discovered that in his laboratory he had succeeded to produce the given substance at such an expense of labour and time. But who with all this can tell us that in the great alembic of nature, where the fire is the will of God, the crucible the whole universe, the product all nature, the producing of things is not carried on at a rate which no investigation can attain to, the duration of which no reasoning can determine?

So much as regards the general views of the divine power, which we, as Israelites, have received from our forefathers. They are above human science, for they are inherent in the very idea of an infinite, eternal Deity, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But even without bidding defiance to the thoughts of scientific men, we may freely endeavour to stand by the Scriptures, since they are reconcilable to the idea of a gradual progress in creation. As the Talmud (Aboth v. 1) well observes, with ten *sayings*, the world was created; that is, we find ten* times the expression "and God said," in the first chapter of

* Rather, nine times, but "in the beginning God created" is also considered as one, it being the origin of all creation, or the effect of the Word.

Genesis; though it is, at the same time, contended that all this could have been produced by one saying. Still so it is; God preferred to fill up the outlines of creation by slow degrees, slow when viewed in comparison with his omnipotence; and precisely as the work of formation progressed, so came on the stage of our world, the earth, the beings suited to the state of preparations made to receive them. Chaos and darkness existed till the light was made; not the reflected light of the sun and the moon, but the substance itself, of which the luminaries are merely the distributors. This new state of light produced the first day, a period when the mute creation enjoyed a refulgence till then unknown and unfelt by it. Next was the separation of the atmosphere from chaos, the expanse in the midst of the water; next the severance of the aqueous from the terrestrial particles; and only then was the earth fitted for the habitation of grasses, plants, and trees, as only in a solid soil, surrounded by an atmosphere, life-sustaining air, and overshadowed by light, can these creatures have their being. Nay, observe the words which bid the plants appear: "Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs, trees bearing fruit," a rise from the inferior to the higher degrees of vegetable substances, thus instancing a progress even discoverable here, and let no one suppose that the expression is merely accidental; for there is no such thing as accident in the words of the law; all proceeds from the purest Source, from the highest Wisdom, and we may rest assured, that however unable we may be to fathom the reason of the divine Mind for so inditing his will, it is not the less true that so, only, and not otherwise, could

the record have come down to us with due regard to truth. But this would open to us a wide field of contemplation; and we must hasten to condense the remainder of our subject in a few words. When plants were thus on earth, existing as they could for a time without heat, even assuming that this was not felt before the sun was appointed to distribute it on earth: the next step was to place the light and the heat requisite for the subsistence of nature in the great solar globe, which was endowed by the Lord with the power of eliciting that amount of these gifts which is necessary for the subsistence of the various degrees of animated and growing created things; and as from the nature of the earth, the sun cannot be always visible to us, our planet was accompanied by a satellite, the moon which, accompanying it in its revolutions, is to give us back the reflected light which it first receives from the centre of our system. And only then when there were earth, and air, and water, and light, and heat, and food, were the different kinds of animals brought forth, first, the inferior kind, which live in the water and in the air, and afterwards those whose habitation is on the dry land; and when the earth was then clad and peopled, then only was man created, the crown, as he is, of God's works, the combination of matter with intellect, of perishable earth and undying spirit. And, as soon as created, he was inspired by God with knowledge, and was appointed the governor of all inferior things, he being the last and the noblest in the scale of creatures whom the Lord God created on the earth; and thus, so far as concerns our globe, the work was finished with the production of man,

at the end of the sixth day, or period, from the commencement of things on our planet. In the whole progress, in all the various things called into existence, the same agency, as we said at first, was alone at work; "and God said" is the uniform phrase; and the result, "it was so," crowned the will. Thus have we been taught that in all the wide extent of the universe there is no associate with the adorable Creator, and hence we cannot bend the knee before any shrine which is inscribed with the name of any other god; we cannot invoke in prayer any other saviour save the mighty and fearful Father, the Lord our God. We are the children of but one God; from the beginning it was but one Power only who produced, or could produce, all the creatures, the high ones who stand at the foot of his throne of glory, ready to execute the will of their Master, and the children of the earth, whose greatest strength is weakness, and who crave his aid in their hour of trial.—And Him alone will we serve; let the world frown on us for our faith, or love us as brothers, and follow us in our example of fearing alone the God of Israel,—it must be all the same to us; we cannot swerve from our allegiance, we cannot forsake our Father, who spoke and the world was, who commanded, and all creation stood forth at his call.—And may He be with us and our spirit, and bless us as He has spoken, with plenty, and with wisdom, and with light and truth. Amen.

Tishry 28th. } 5608.
October 8th. }

DISCOURSE XV.

GUARDING THE FAITH.*

O God! who art mindful of thy covenant, faithful and steadfast in thy promises, we call on Thee in all ages and in every place as our only Guardian and King, as the One from whom proceeds our salvation, and who is the Rock of our strength. For who is with Thee in heaven? and whom can we find near Thee on earth? The other gods, where are they? and the saviours, where can they be found? O truly have we felt and experienced that it is only Thou, the unending and undying One, who art alone all-powerful,—omnipotent to punish, and almighty to save, and from thy wrath there is no concealing the sinner; for all the earth is full of thy glory; and when Thou willest to bless, there is nothing to stay thy pleasure; for all benefits and mercies are in Thy hand, Father of eternity! who livest forever. So bless us all with thy goodness, and satisfy our souls with thy munificence, and preserve us before Thee, as thy people whom Thou hast redeemed, with whom Thou madest a covenant of everlasting truth, that they should always obtain thy favour, if they would only lean on Thee for support, and call on thy Name for forgiveness and mercy. And, O, let the light of thy countenance shine on us, and remove from our midst all the ills which afflict us, and grant us thy favour, which is life, now and forever. Amen.

* This address was spoken in the Crosby Street Synagogue, New York.

Brethren!

It is well said by men of the world, that the price of civil liberty is eternal watchfulness; carelessness of our personal rights would soon surrender them to the ill usage of designing and crafty oppressors; and it is only the vigilance and the jealousy with which we watch every approach of tyranny and injustice, that enable us to preserve for ourselves the boon of self-government, which is the native right of every human being, and of which he cannot be deprived without manifest injustice. Now it is nothing unusual for men to be sedulous in defence of their civil freedom; they sacrifice for it life and treasure, and assail at other times fiercely those who would rob them of it; and the annals of the world are filled with details of heroic deeds of the champions of the rights of men, and their memory is embalmed as a precious legacy to after-generations. Yet this liberty is not the highest boon which we have received from God; it is not the best gift which we have obtained, high and good though it be. For there is a higher and better treasure which is within our reach, and it will, when properly appreciated, perfect yet more the benefits which the other bestows,—and this divine thing we call religion. It is indeed the light of the soul, the guide to eternity, which flourishes best in the mind of him who is free from all fear except that for his Maker; who is deaf to the allurements of gain, of interest, of personal aggrandizement, and who heeds no voice which is not the echo of that glorious revelation which was heard by our fathers from the summit of Mount Horeb, when it was enveloped by the brilliant clouds and the blazing fire which

issued from the midst of darkness, when the Majesty of heaven descended unto earth to teach mankind wisdom and knowledge: wisdom—that they might be freed from the corruptions of wicked deceivers who elevate the creature above the Creator, and knowledge—that they might know how to live in accordance with the wishes of the Father of all that have breath and spirit.—Do you wonder then that ages have elapsed and the law is still revered? Are you astonished that trials and dangers have but rivetted yet closer the chains which bind us to God? If one does love liberty the more, after he has been unjustly held in bondage and compelled to labour for those who return no wages for his daily toil, and who repay every complaint with the blow of the taskmaster's whip; if one does prize freedom the more dearly, after he has been kept locked up within the prison's walls for a defence of the inalienable rights of man, with no society save the spider that wove his web between the bars of his narrow cell; and who heard no pleasant sound save that of the chirping bird when he alighted gay and free near the cleft in the walls of the dungeon; and who saw no human face except the cruel visage of the jailor when he brought him his daily scanty portion of bread and water;—ay, do such as these prize the privilege of being once more restored to the free enjoyment of their natural rights and powers: can the Israelite do otherwise than glory in the possession of his religion, which has been endeared to him by the multitude of struggles which he had to wage in its defence? by the incessant strife against all the hateful passions of an ignorant world, who sought to extinguish the

spark of heavenly flame which glows and kindles ever a new and brighter light within the recesses of our soul, where it is buried deeply, and lives securely, sheltered by the inherent strength which our God has implanted within us, so that we might be his witnesses, and his servants unto the end of days? Unto the end of days! monstrous thought! we throw out these words as of no particular meaning, as a vague conception of something indefinite. But let us define them in their literal acceptation; and what do they mean? Simply this: that let all on earth perish; let the sun be blotted out from the skies; let the moon vanish from her orbit: and only then can we cease to follow our appointed course, even like these servants of God, who will fulfil their mission up to the time of their destruction, which is a period so remote by the action of natural causes that we cannot estimate its arrival; for to our apprehension the earth is built upon an immovable basis, that it may not be destroyed unto eternity. Yet even so are we to be from our organization; this was our destiny, and hitherto we have followed it amidst all the dangers from without and rebellion from within, of which our checkered history has furnished the record; and we are left on earth to proclaim the same truth which our fathers for so many generations delivered down from one to the other unto our own days; and we have never yet adopted in its place any doctrine or custom which had not its foundation in the same faith, which they were the instrument of diffusing abroad in the world. And hence it is that we call ourselves Israelites at this day; that we yet acknowledge that we are servants of the Most High under the law of Sinai; that

we stand in contradiction to all the other nations, who do not acquiesce in our line of duty, and teach salvation through other means than an obedience to the code of Moses, and a belief in dogmas which did not descend to us from the calling of Abraham and the election of Israel. Let then the world say that you have been rejected by your Father, let them say that others have been called to testify to God's glory: waver not, fear not, change not; but tell them that it is true that we have sinned, that the wrath of God is still poured out as it was in former years; but that for all this the prophet says, in the name of the Lord:

ברגע קטן עזבתיך וברחמים גדלים אקבצך : כי ההרים ימושו והגבעות תמוטנה וחסד מאתך לא ימוש וברית שלומי לא תמוט אמר מרחמך ה' :

ישע' נר' ז' י' :

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.—For the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah liv. 7, 10.

You will see in these two verses that it was supposed probable, in the providence of God, that a time would come when the children of Israel should be for a time forsaken by their Father on account of their neglecting his instruction, of which the prophet himself, whose words we quote, gives us ample illustration; nevertheless he adds at once that, although thus for a while forsaken, we should be gathered again at the awakening of the great mercy which was foreshadowed by the prophetic visions from the beginning;

inasmuch as it is not the intention of the Creator to prolong his anger unto all generations, and to let his indignation burn without ceasing. And observe the conclusion of the prophecy; for there it says, that though destruction should overtake the immovable hills and mountains, by which the earth would fall into decay, the mercy with which God has always regarded us shall not depart from watching over our being, and his covenant of peace shall not be removed from us, and this we are assured by the One through whose mercies we live though ever so undeserving of his favour; undeserving, I say, because we have neglected his laws in so many ways, and this whenever opportunity presented itself for sin.

Now let us see what is our duty in this connexion. The prophet uses a peculiar phrase as that which is not to be removed, it is "the covenant of God's peace." Words so remarkable cannot have been chosen without design, the holy Spirit which spoke through the prophets could not have selected an expression so peculiar without intending to convey to us grave and serious instruction. Let us then endeavour to trace the idea here embraced, by the light which the Scriptures throw on the subject. Kindness, the first word used in the impending blessing, is readily distinguished as that sentiment of affection which one feels for those connected with him by the ties of kindred, whom he serves without any thought perhaps of their worthiness or otherwise; it is unbought love which impels the gift, it is to benefit which is designed, be the recipients grateful or not, for we gratify the impulse which bids us to serve those of whom we have the knowledge that they are ours by

the blood which flows in their veins. Thus then the Almighty promises us his kindness, as though we were of his own family, to use a word almost profane when speaking of the Holy One, were it not that He himself has called Israel "his first-born son," which means those members of the human family in whom He has that peculiar interest which a parent naturally entertains for the first-born among his children. So that worthy or not, virtuous or sinful we are assured that we shall not be lost sight of by our heavenly Father; but that He will watch over and protect us, because He delighteth in mercy. But the second clause, "the covenant of God's peace," must mean something in which the Israelites themselves have a sphere of action. A covenant is generally speaking a contract by which something is conceded for an equivalent, where the one who receives the favour is to do something in return, however inadequate it may be, to that which is bestowed on him. There may perhaps be an exception to the general acceptation of the term in the institution of the rainbow as a sign of "the covenant between God and every living creature, of all flesh that is upon the earth," where evidently the whole exemption from a recurrence of the flood is a mere gracious favour of God, not in any manner to be obtained by human actions. Still in other places, covenant means a mutual concession, or a recompense in other cases for something already done. For instance with Abraham it is said, "But thou shalt observe my covenant;" with the Sabbath it is said, "And the children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant;" and in the

same manner in many other places. If then it be in our power to do something as contracting parties in the covenant of peace promised us here in Isaiah: it is evidently quite reasonable that whatever this be can be justly demanded of us, in return for the mercy received.—Now the additional word "peace," as it is said "the covenant of my peace," will give us the clue to supply the desired answer. We may maintain as a general principle, that whereas observing God's law confers peace, a state of sin is one of warfare against the Deity; righteousness is the support of the world, whereas sin is its subversion; through obedience to God's commands individuals are accepted on High, and nations prosper in their civil and domestic relations; whereas through transgressions individuals are rejected by the Lord, and strife and bloodshed, and tribulations of all kinds, distract entire communities and bring to ruin the mightiest empires. So then says the prophet (Isaiah lvii. 21): "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Thus also in the preceding verse: "But the wicked are like a troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Since the effect of unrighteousness is evil, and, whenever the wicked come on the stage of life, they are at once in opposition to the peaceful reign of the law of God, bringing the workings of human passions to bear with an oppressive weight upon the good which others, who fear the Most High, may attempt to produce. But when righteousness is restored to the heart of the sinner, the state of strife instantly terminates, he re-enters into a covenant with God, that he will keep the commandments, and call down upon himself the blessings which the pious are

to receive at the hand of Supreme Mercy. We are therefore told, that when contrition shall have taken possession of the heart of man, there shall be "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near;" meaning whether a man have transgressed little, or whether he have totally neglected his duties, he will have the divine peace restored to him, as soon as he has been healed of his mental disease by the means of righteousness which are so abundantly pointed out in the Scriptures. It is our business to return from our iniquity, to seek the favour which we have jeopardized by our misdeeds, thus restoring the harmony which is to subsist in all creation, which is however disrupted, whenever sin lifts up her baleful head.

We are thus enabled to explain satisfactorily the significance of the promise we are discussing. It is a prediction that a time will come, when there shall subsist a covenant of peace between God and Israel; not a condition of sin, wherein the Creator is, so to say, excluded by men's own folly from being their true Governor; but a state of righteousness wherein He is acknowledged as He is indeed notwithstanding our occasional stubbornness, the Supreme Head of all the beings which exist in the whole extent of the creation. But of whom is this happy reconciliation possible? of whom can it be, nay is it, said, that they shall enjoy the divine kindness and be reconciled to God and nature through a covenant in which peace is founded upon a union with the Lord? It is predicted of the congregation of Israel, who in their present state of captivity, isolation, dispersion and disunion, are compared to a barren woman who has never felt the pains and joys of maternity. This na-

tion, thus long neglected, thus so long deemed forsaken, is called on to rejoice at the numerous offspring which are to present themselves as its descendants, to such a degree that the dwellings, at one time deemed ample and strong enough for the small number of believers, shall have to be enlarged and strengthened, so that there may be room and place for the mighty throng who are to hasten again to worship the Lord of Hosts, the God of their fathers. Now what does this presuppose, but the permanence of the people of Israel? And how is this to be effected? Only through our constant adherence to God, and by training up our children that they too may walk in the light of the Lord, and transmit again the instruction which they have received to those who are to rise up after them, to the end of all times, let the age of the world be ever so old, ever so far remote. And how are we to accomplish this mission? are we to neglect the duties which we have been taught to regard as sacred? are we to be careless, whether or not the name of God be profaned through our means? do we accomplish our destiny when it may be said of us with justice: "Behold, these men call themselves the chosen of the Lord, and see how they neglect their religion! see how their places of business are open on the days they call holy! see how they are not to be distinguished in their religious acts from other men! see how they slight the social duties and laws of personal holiness which their faith demands of them?" Is it possible that in this manner we can be justified before God? be considered even just before men? And yet it is for the paltry object often of being less ridiculous in the eyes of mortals like ourselves,

that we hide and conceal our religion as something to be ashamed of; that we may pass in the crowd as other men, as persons not belonging to the house of Israel, as though our religion could, with any degree of justice, bring upon us shame and disgrace. Perhaps this shyness may be a remnant of the dread with which we regarded, in times of persecution, all non-Israelites, when all gentiles, almost without any exception, had to be looked upon as enemies to the Jews; since nearly every hand was raised up to strike us down to the earth, when compassion towards a child of Israel was well-nigh held as a crime in the then moral aspect of a vast majority of mankind. But let me ask you, What reason have we to assign now, especially in this land of religious liberty, of constitutional freedom, for hiding our principles in a corner? in shrinking from a public profession of what we believe to be true, of openly doing what we believe to be right and proper? O, that we had the same pride in our religion which so many sectarians feel! O, that we had the same energy to diffuse a knowledge of our tenets, which the zealous ones of other persuasions display so much to our shame, so greatly to our confusion! Is our cause less deserving of zeal than theirs, that we are so lukewarm in its defence, so careless about its propagation? How, I demand, are the children, the pledges which the Lord has entrusted to your safekeeping, to become firm and true Israelites, if their parents are so slothful in their education? so remiss in training them to the true way by precept and example? how are they to become participants in the future glory of our race, to be members of the covenant of God's peace, if they

are left to stray, through ignorance, from the fold of the great Shepherd, to become a prey to the devouring wolves who are constantly watching their steps, and lay snares that they may be caught and torn away from their faith? You say, perhaps, "We let our children know they are Jews; we teach them their prayers; they are made acquainted with the Hebrew; we tell them to honour their Sabbath, and to attend public worship." But this is not enough. You must endeavour to make them proud of the privilege of being Jews; they ought to be made to feel that it is a blessing to be a scion of Israel, a member of that people who are blessed above all others with the possession of a law which is derived from heaven, which is free from error, based on truth, and promotive of all that is good and blissful. And O! never let it be laid to your charge, that you gave them cause for apostacy, that you led them to sin by your conversation, by your ridiculing the principles and practices of Judaism; never let it be on your consciences, when the hand of sickness lies heavily on you, or when death stands near to bear off your soul to the judgment-seat of your Creator, that you contributed in the least to the lamentable result that one of your descendants should be wanting in the congregation of Israel. And when the dread Judge, the Lord of all spirits, comes to number his flock, to select those who are his, to cause those to dwell in his presence who are holy: let Him not have to frown on you, because that you led astray unto foreign pastures the lambs entrusted to your watchful keeping; and be it the business of your life, to have all faithful, and true, and ready, as far as lies in your power,

whomsoever you can influence by your instruction, by your authority, and by your example, in order that the servants of the Lord may be many, and all Israel be benefitted by your exertions. Nor should you say, "What use can our actions be? we are humble, we are ignorant, we are poor; who heeds our words? who regards our admonition?" In this you deceive yourselves; act *your* part, fulfil faithfully your mission, and consider well that the Lord requires all his servants to labour; to Him no one is high; in his regard no one is low; for the highest among men is nothing compared to his greatness, and the lowliest is a participant of his care and providence. So then teach and exhort, act and guide, however lowly you are; and the hearts of many may be warmed, excited to a better impulse; and as a small portion of leaven, however unsightly, leavens a whole dough, so may you be instrumental, unknown to yourselves, to give an impulse to some one near you, by which means more and more may be gradually drawn into the sacred influence, to be, like yourselves, servants of the Most High. Equally foolish would it be in those occupying an elevated position to imagine that they could not be expected to labour, like the humble, in the cause of their religion; or that there existed for their children any exemption from the active duties incumbent on Israelites in general. For they are all subject to the same laws, descended from the same honoured ancestry, and as Israelites only can they participate, at the end of the warfare of our race, in the good which the Lord has promised us. And how do we know what may result from any act of our own? can we foresee, and therefore set bounds

beforehand, to the consequences of our deeds? can we penetrate into the ramifications of ultimate results from a given cause? No one of us can know aught of all this. It is evidently, therefore, our sacred obligation to contribute to the permanence and glory of Israel by every means in our power, and to rest satisfied with nothing less than a continual striving in the fulfilment of the duty expressed in the words of the law, "And I will be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel."

Brethren! Let us act as we will, we cannot destroy the identity of Israel; it is not so much a constantly newly produced miracle which causes this result, as the nature of the religion which God gave to our fathers. Just as the sun receives not daily a new light, but shines on with the luminous power imparted to him at the creation: so does Israel work on in the path designed for it through the mental light which was imparted to it from Sinai. But it is the preservation of the individuals to which you, brothers and sisters of our noble people, are called on to contribute; let this be your task, your whole striving, the problem of your life; so will your descendants and disciples, to the last generation, become participants in the covenant of peace through righteousness, which the Lord has made and will renew with us all, and thus will none of your offspring be absent when the God of heaven and earth will bless us and all mankind, but chiefly us of Israel, with abundance of peace at the coming of the son of David. Amen.

Heshvan 5th.
October 15th. } 5608.

DISCOURSE XVI.

OUR POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS.

THOU, who art the Source of all blessings, and the Author of all perfections! deign to regard us with thy favour, and bestow on us the light of thy countenance, and grant us peace and tranquillity of mind. Let the billows of adversity then rage around us, we shall still be safe, and pursue our onward course undismayed; for Thou art with us, and thy staff and thy prop will be our support; and we shall be secure though mountains are moved, and hills sink prostrate in the heart of the seas. And though we then be the humble of the earth, we shall be great through thy mercy; and the adverse events of life will pass by us without shaking our confidence in thy overruling providence. For we shall then feel that we are upheld by Thee, and that no evil can befall us, unless in thy wisdom it is decreed that we should suffer for our ultimate happiness; so that all the occurrences which overtake us will teach us to look up to Thee for light, and inspire us with thankfulness if we are at peace, and with resignation if our light is darkened, and we experience the pains which fall to the lot of humanity. So shall we be purified and rendered clean in thy presence, and be reckoned among those whom Thou wilt bless, because Thou art good and beneficent. Amen.

BRETHREN!

When Isaac, our ancestor, dwelt in the land of the Philistines, he was driven away by the authorities of the country because he had become too powerful for them; perhaps in the then sparse state of the population of Philistia, an enterprising chief who like Abraham could arm three hundred and eighteen inmates of his house whenever he needed their services, and which power was doubtless possessed by Isaac likewise, although it is not so distinctly stated, might in a measure become dangerous to the existing governments in the various districts, governed as each of them were by a separate king or chief, should he deem it comporting with his interest to join either a domestic faction who might rebel against the regular authorities, or some foreign enemy, who, as was the custom in that early period of the history of man, might invade the country for conquest or mere love of plunder. It was, therefore, probably no personal dislike to our peaceful progenitor, so much as the dread of what he might become, were he so disposed, which induced the king Abimelech to tell him to go away from the capital of his small dominions, because he had literally grown too powerful for the safety of the state. Nevertheless, Isaac obeyed the royal mandate, though he might have remained against the wishes of the king, if we consider his numerous retinue and the attachment which his servants evidently felt for him; he set an example of submission to lawful authority, although he was personally put to great inconvenience by so doing, and like his eminent father he went to dwell in tents, and devoted his attention to agriculture and the improvement of the soil; and

though constantly foiled by the malevolence of the country people, who disputed unjustly the possession of the wells which he had caused to be dug, under the plea that the water was theirs, he persevered in his peaceful walk of life: till at length all opposition ceased against a man who, whilst fearlessly doing what is just, disdained to use violence to maintain his right through the power which he possessed, and who recognized the even doubtful rights of others, sooner than let the sword be the arbiter of their disputes. It was indeed with him the triumph of the pious mind which we are called on to admire; the patient perseverance which, leaning on God for support, could well await the issue of the contest in which he was engaged despite of his peaceful temperament. And the end was as the whole tenor of the Bible teaches us, that it will always be well with the righteous, often in this life even; and the blessing of the Lord was vouchsafed to him; inasmuch as on removing a short distance from the valley of Gerar he dug another well, of which the Philistines no longer contested his right of possession, and he called it, therefore, *Rechoboth*, from the root רחב *rachab*, broad, signifying that then the Lord had given him ample room, and that he and his household could, therefore, increase in the land. And the consequence of the action of Isaac is next given us in the narrative which follows, being in effect that Abimelech with his general and friend came to him from Gerar; and upon question of the patriarch why they sought him out in his retirement, since from their hatred to him, as he had good reason to think it, they had sent him away from their midst? they replied that they had come only to make a treaty

of mutual peace with him, so that he, though now even mightier than before, should do them no evil, inasmuch as they had done him no bodily harm when banishing him from Gerar, and shown him kindness before they sent him away; for, they added,

אתה עתה ברוך ה׳ : בר׳ כו׳ כט׳ :

"Thou art now one blessed of the Lord." Gen. xxvi. 29.

They acknowledged in this manner that the prosperity which he enjoyed was the effect of an immediate divine blessing, seeing that under all adverse circumstances, whether this was from the hindrance laid in his way by men, or the unfavourable state of the country wherein he toiled, his success was more than any one had ever estimated, and since he bore his prosperity in such a way that no injury resulted thence to any one around him. All this induced the chiefs of Philistia to desire the friendship of the God-favoured stranger; and he at once, forgetting the banishment which he had suffered at their hands, and the violent seizure of his wells, swore unto them a covenant of peace, and they departed from him as friends to their homes.

Shall not the history of Isaac have a powerful influence on us, on all Israelites wherever they may dwell? Reflect, brethren, the Bible is given us for instruction; it is not merely an idle curiosity which is to be gratified by the various narratives which it contains; but it is intended that we should thence draw lessons for life, in order that we may be improved by the example of the holy ones who lived before us, and

become distinguished in our words and actions as a people taught and saved by the Lord, the Shield of our salvation and the Sword of our excellency, as the holy One is called in reference to us by the great prophet when giving us his last charge, the moment before he was concealed from the eyes of the living. Not less, therefore, than other passages in Scripture is the history of Isaac calculated to give us lessons of holiness. It is indeed an unobtrusive narrative, of a quiet man who never performed any great deeds in his life; who never roamed far from the place of his birth, and sought no renown by remarkable or romantic adventures. His was not the bold spirit of his father Abraham, nor had he the patient endurance of his renowned son Jacob, by which this one rose superior to difficulties which would have crushed weaker minds, or bodily constitutions less firm and less able to bear up against fatigue and exposure. Notwithstanding, we have in Isaac an example of another kind, that of a uniform faithfulness and honesty of purpose throughout a long if not eventful life, and have thus exhibited to us a chart, we may call it, of the duties which fall to the lot of all men. Great deeds, such as the bold rupture with the idolaters of his time on the part of Abraham, the fearless public preaching of the truth which his heart so deeply treasured up by the father of the faithful, can only be rarely witnessed; for even if the men were there to do these great acts, the opportunities would not offer themselves at all times and at all places. With the times and emergencies, men equal to grapple with them will ever be forthcoming to the light of day; they will emerge from the masses of beings around

them, and show by the power inherent in them that they are destined by Providence to rule the storm, and to ride upon the angry waves of public commotion. But in times of quietness, when no great crisis impends over the affairs of men, the minds, endowed with greatness, may quietly rule by their inherent superiority over others; but they cannot acquire that far-reaching and preëminent station which times of danger, revolution, and high excitement alone can produce. Although it may be granted that genius of a high order will create in some shape or other the opportunities for display, for this is a portion of the endowment which it receives from the hand of Creative Power: it is nevertheless undeniable that its range is limited by the atmosphere in which it breathes, and the circumstances of the times in which it is called on the stage of life. So that, however much we may be excited to admiration by the acts of the great luminaries which have shed their lustrous light over the history of the human race, we may sigh in vain in the utter hopelessness of ever becoming like them. No one may dream, in his wildest reveries, of being an Abraham, a Moses, a David, or an Isaiah; it is only the few, who are to be a light to the world, who reach the eminence on which they were placed: and yet each one had a quality peculiarly his own to which the others did not attain. There are, however, deeds in which all can excel, there are eminences which all can reach; there are qualities of the heart and mind which all can acquire as their own: so that no one need sigh or grieve that it is not given to him to be of the exalted, of those whose names are familiar household-words to all men, and

whose characters have become the common property of all mankind. Mortals may perhaps imagine that their cause has not been properly adjudged by their Maker in thus elevating the few to an unapproachable height; yet in good truth it is not for their own sake that they were distinguished, but the general benefit of all; great deeds were demanded, and they became the agents of Heaven to effect his high behests; instruments were needed, and the Creator selected those whom He found endowed with the proper spirit to work out the regeneration of mankind. It is indeed something exalted to be so distinguished as Moses was; nevertheless it was an especial divine guidance which, after all his greatness of soul and strength of intellect, enabled him to fulfil the mission for which he had been chosen; and this he teaches us in almost every line of the books which he was ordered to write for our instruction. So then mankind at large must necessarily labour according to the inscrutable decrees of Providence, each one in his assigned sphere of limited capacity and usefulness; and only according as he exerts himself well and cheerfully up to the utmost capacity he has received will he be accepted as having accomplished the full measure of his duty; and then when the Lord apportions the reward which He has in store for his servants, will each one receive that precise recompense which his honesty of purpose deserves; it will not be so much the amount as the manner of the performance, which will be the standard of merit before the One who creates the heart and knows all its imperfections.

So then we have in the lives of the Patriarchs

various degrees of greatness; that of a bold awakening of mankind on the part of Abraham; the firm resistance to unexpected misfortunes without forsaking his innocence on the part of Jacob; and the acceptability through unostentatious righteousness in the person of Isaac. Now let us see how his life is sketched to us in the usual few rapid strokes of the pen of the sacred historian, who in teaching us employs but a limited number of words to finish his pictures, so that we might be induced to think over what is given to us, not peruse it lightly as a mere amusing narrative or pleasantly wrought up sketches of interesting characters.—Isaac, like us his descendants, was a sojourner in the land which he inhabited; his native place was probably the neighbourhood of Beër-sheba, where we find that Abraham was settled soon after the birth of his son; at all events Philistia was not the land he considered his home; this was the country of Canaan which had been assigned to him as his inheritance, and the future theatre of his children's greatness. We have already shown that he was a powerful chieftain, whose wealth and numerous retinue appeared dangerous to the rulers of the state. Nevertheless we see him paying prompt obedience to an unjust decree, not wishing to shed human blood, and because he deemed it his duty to submit to the legal authorities of the country, although injuriously affected by them. Moreover he devoted himself to the improvement of the soil, commenced agriculture on an extensive scale, although informed through the prophecy which had been revealed to his immediate progenitor that his descendants should become strangers in a land not theirs, and that they should be held

to labour for a long period. Consequently he must have been convinced that all improvement he might make would, before long, fall to the share of those among whom he temporarily lived. Notwithstanding this he devoted much energy to the permanent improvement of the country, not alone by tilling the soil and raising cattle, but by opening again the wells which in their malicious spite and envy the senseless Philistines had filled with earth after the death of Abraham who had first caused them to be dug. Any one acquainted with the nature of the country in and around Palestine, must readily acknowledge that no greater blessing can be conferred upon the husbandman there, than to give him a full supply of water, inasmuch as rain is unfrequent in summer, and since in seasons of drought this necessary element often entirely disappears from the running brooks. So let us even admit that both patriarchs had the wells in question made for the use of their numerous flocks in the first instance: there can be for all that no question that they conferred a permanent benefit in the country of their adoption; since they gave the farmers places of access for irrigating their fields, should the rains of heaven fail or the dew not sufficiently moisten the thirsting soil, and to the shepherds pleasant cisterns whither they might lead their flocks, to give them drink out of the troughs left there by their perhaps unknown benefactors.—After all when Isaac had submitted to every sort of insult; when he had yielded his previous labour to those who were either too indolent to help themselves or had not sufficient scientific knowledge to sink wells, he was ready at the first word of conciliation to make peace and renew friendship

with those who had wrongfully thought that he would harbour views inimical to the interests of the state; and he forgave them all the vexations and injuries they had caused him, without even demanding compensation for the losses he had sustained through their wrong-doing.—The malevolence of the Philistines had in vain been exercised to check the progress of Isaac; no matter what they did, no matter how many obstacles they threw in his way, he succeeded beyond all sanguine calculations; he grew not less in moral greatness at the same time than in worldly prosperity; and with every new trial he had a greater opportunity for showing in his quiet way the great superiority of a follower of the true God over those who worshipped the vanities and follies of human invention. In the midst of anticipated failure the servant of God prospered abundantly, and though urged by the sting of wrong suffered to use the carnal power and seek redress for grievance by his own might, he submitted patiently until it should please God to grant him enlargement. The heathens themselves had thus an undeniable proof that their former enemy. enemy they deemed him though he had done them no wrong, was one protected by that great Power whom Abraham had proclaimed in former years, and to whose Name many altars had been erected by that great light in his wanderings through the land. They had all learned that *his* power was great, that of right He deserved the adoration of mortals, though in the perverseness of their heart they still had not adopted his service. As one then blessed by the Eternal, the God of Abraham, they now viewed the man they had so fearfully tried, and demanded his friendship as one

whom events had proved the blessed of the Lord; and as a servant of this, the Most High, was Isaac induced to swear them in truth, and they departed from him in peace.

Let us apply the lesson here given to ourselves. We like our ancestors are wanderers from our distant home; speak to us of the freedom we enjoy; of the privileges which are accorded to us by the potentates of the earth: we still may say, the Israelites' land is that of the olive and vine, the citron and myrtle, of the palm, the rose and the cedar; where the skies are bright, and the earth is fruitful from the springs of the earth and the plenteous showers and dews of heaven. Ay, now it lies desolate, its cisterns are broken, its terraces are swept away, and thorns choke up its fountains, and thistles wave in triumph over fields where once rose and fell the waves of a rich corn-harvest, as it bowed and bent before the pleasant breeze that swept over the beautiful landscape. Ay, its inhabitants are far away, scattered to the four winds of heaven, wanderers wherever the ocean laves a distant shore, scattered wherever the sun shines on the face of the earth; speaking the language of every people, and obeying the laws of every land. Long has this state endured; changes have passed over the fate of our race; still we constantly think of the days that are past, and of the glorious hopes which the Bible has given us; we believe, and therefore do we speak, that a day will come when the wilderness shall bloom, and the waste places shall be built up, and the government be restored as aforetimes. But what should we be in the meanwhile in all the lands where we live? Even

as was Isaac in Philistia, although he knew, as we know now, that a future full of peace, and freedom, and light, is before us, that he should suffer in his descendants the horrors of slavery and oppression before the fixed period for redemption. The divine Providence, thus impending, did not inspire him with a moody recklessness of the passing hour, not with hatred to the unbelievers among whom he lived; on the contrary, we have seen how he laboured faithfully and successfully to promote his worldly prosperity, thereby contributing to the good of the state, whilst he displayed a character full of love, forbearance and forgiveness to those who differed from him in religion. He remembered that, as a true servant of God, he was bound to omit nothing by which the name of the Lord might be honoured; and we have seen also that he succeeded in this noble effort. Let us, therefore, also act in this manner. Let us contribute to the welfare of every state in which we happen to live; omit no opportunity of showing a ready obedience to the laws; aid cheerfully towards supporting the burdens of the state, in whatever manner we can, and never be guilty of breaches of the laws, by which we could justly draw upon ourselves public animadversions, or the punishments which the criminal codes may prescribe. As Israelites, in short, we are bound to seek the peace of the country wherein our lot is cast, and we cannot infringe against this solemn civil duty without, at the same time, violating the positive injunction of our Scriptures, and neglect the example of our fathers. Let our enemies say that we are aliens to the state, that, as we hope for a national reunion, we have no

interest in any other country than Palestine; but tell them, that wherever we are, we are by the dispensation of God; whatever land we live in, we consider our fatherland up to the moment in which it may please the Lord to summon us away; our religious hopes have no concern whatever with our political duties, and consequently cannot affect, with any degree of justice, our political rights. No Jew can consistently with his religious obligations defraud the revenues, or transgress the statute-laws of any state, however unjust he may deem them to his personal interest; he is willing to be obedient in all things, save when this should come in conflict with his duties to God, since no human laws can exact from him an unfaithfulness to his religion. Within this range, the Israelite is from duty and inclination obedient to the laws of all lands; and what citizen or subject can be more so? why then should strangers regard him with suspicion, because on a speculative doctrinal point he entertains views of his own, which can at the same time never come in conflict with his social obligations? Thus may you meet objections that are urged against you; but never renounce your hopes, either to obtain favour from the gentiles, or to appear ready to assimilate with them in your opinions. You may value your future destinies but lightly; you may be yourselves indifferent about what is to happen at the end of days; but your indifference and unbelief do not destroy the power of God to effect his purpose; and the future will as surely become history, the prediction will become fulfilment, as the past has hitherto faithfully corresponded with the declared intentions of the Lord. Read the records of the past, and un-

belief must stand rebuked; and if you do not understand how the fulfilment of the promises is to be brought about, confess your own want of knowledge, but do not limit the power of the Creator, or assert that He is unwilling and unable to execute all which He has spoken.

But whilst you thus do your duty as citizens of the world, forget not that you must follow faithfully in the path of duty as Jews which your religion marks out to you. You should be consistent in your professions and actions, so that no man should be able to charge you with dishonouring your faith by an open neglect of its precepts. Be herein, too, like your ancestor. He lived alone with his household among idolaters; yet he contrived to combine the duties of the citizen with those of the follower of the One Supreme. Do so in your own persons. Love your neighbours of whatever creed; assist them in their distress, comfort them in their sorrow, and let your plighted word be the most sacred pledge, by never violating it in letter or spirit. Let your *yea* be *yea*, and your *no*, *no;* truth without disguise, fairness and candour in your intercourse with the world, should preëminently characterize all who profess to believe in Him whom Isaac reverenced. At the same time let it be your constant striving to bring your civil character in strict conformity and agreement with your religious obligation; forego all offices the execution of which would compel you to violate your duty to God; rather prefer obscurity than purchase distinction by becoming strangers to the sanctuary of our Father. In short do every thing so, that should evil or good betide you, the gentiles may be compelled to acknowledge that

you and the house of Israel are men blessed of the Lord. So shall, through your endeavours, the name of the Lord be sanctified and exalted, in the world which He has created according to his will in the greatness of his intelligence, and you be deemed worthy to see the advent of his kingdom in the person of his anointed. Amen.

Kislev 4th. } 5608.
Nov. 12th. }

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE PROSPERITY OF THE STATE.*

Thou who clothest the year with plenty, and coverest with fatness the flocks, and feedest the children of the raven when they cry for food! accept in thy condescending kindness the offering of thanks which we bring unto Thee in thy house of prayer, where we are this day permitted to assemble, sustained alive by thy almighty will. Again have the seasons changed; and the snow of winter melted away before the sweet sunshine of the vernal months, and the earth was clad with verdure, and the trees were decked with blossoms, and the summer ripened the fruit and the corn, and the autumn saw a plentiful increase housed in the garners of the husbandmen; and now the chill blasts of the wintry winds have

* A Thanksgiving address for Kislev 17th, 5608.

anew swept over the face of the land, and we survey with elevated heart the abundance which thy hand has bestowed, and revel in the luxuries which thy bounty has scattered abroad for our enjoyment. And health too has returned where disease not long ago rioted in a fearful triumph, where it bore away its thousands to an early tomb; but thy frost came and arrested the hand of the destroyer, and deserted streets are again filled with the erst affrighted inhabitants, and they pursue as aforetime their pleasures and their toils, rejoiced that the danger is overpast, and that the pestilence no longer lurks in every breath that is wafted to them to cool with its noxious pleasantness their fevered brow. O! that we might truly recognize Thee in these blessings! that our heart might not be lifted up in vain imaginings of its own strength and sufficiency; for truly it is thy will which feeds us when others hunger, it is thy mercy which scatters health, which bids us live securely, whilst elsewhere rages the fierce strife of war, and are commingled the shout of the victors, the cry of the conquered, and are heard between the moans of the dying, the groans of the wounded. O save us from our own presumption, teach us to lean on Thee, holy Father and King! so that we may love Thee because Thou art good, and serve Thee because thou art the great God, the Father of everlasting, to whom be praise, glory, and adoration, from all flesh and spirit, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Amen.

Brethren!

David, in his hundred and thirty-eighth Psalm, re-

turns his thanks for the many mercies which he had received from the Giver of all good, and in the midst of the outpouring of his grateful feelings he says:

יודוך ה׳ כל מלכי ארץ כי שמעו אמרי פיך :
והל׳ קלח׳ ד׳:

"All the kings of the earth shall thank thee, O Lord! because they have heard the words of thy mouth." Ps. cxxxviii. 4.

And well may we say, that daily the inspired hopes of the prophet-poet of Israel are becoming more and more fulfilled. Who in his day called on the Father of all? What nation save the Hebrews, knew then of the words of the Lord? Who did not among the gentiles ascribe power to the inventions of his own fancy, the works of the hands of man, of gold and silver, of wood and of stone? But since his time the people whom he was ordained to guide, as a shepherd feeds his flock, became false, to all appearance, unto the great God who had so long protected them, and shown them mercies without number; and they were driven out of their peaceful folds by the devouring beasts of the forest, and many of them were torn in pieces by the claws of the lion, or were given as food to the hungry night-wolf. And yet they perished not all; and the more they were given to slaughter, the farther they were scattered, the more extensively became their law and their God known and revered among the nations, and truly may we affirm, that through our wounds healing has been carried unto many nations; since they learned first from us, then afterwards from each other, some of the truths of our

law, and they have become convinced, "that the Lord is the God in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; there is none else." It is true, that they have not totally been freed from error and misconception of divine truths; that still they worship not as we do; that they even now do not call on the One great and tremendous Name, before whom the angels tremble, and the servants in the celestial sanctuary stand in dread and awe: nevertheless we may affirm that many hearts are turned to seek the way of the Lord from the book of life which He first imparted to us; and that, though they are not Israelites, and perhaps pity or hate us because that we do not share their ideas of the godhead, or with them neglect the positive precepts of the law, they still are visibly tinctured with our morality, and guided by the selfsame moral precepts of universal love which breathes through the pages of the holy Scriptures. If this is the case with the imperfect adoption of our belief, mixed up as the popular opinions are with much that we must reject as incompatible with the evident meaning of the words of our sacred text: how great will needs be the universal change, and how unspeakable the general happiness, when once the law of Heaven becomes the sole and universal standard of right, and the only arbiter between man and man, and teaches all alike how to fear, how to worship God. If already so many kings of nations and mighty empires call on the Lord, and cast away the dependence they formerly felt on things which are not god: how much more universal must this state become when all the kings of the earth shall have heard the words of the mouth of the Lord, the true words which He proclaimed

from Sinai, when his redeemed servants stood assembled, with their wives and little ones, to hear the commands of their almighty King and everlasting Father, when they became bound to Him by chains which no time can disrupt, which no rust can eat up in the lapse of centuries. And the very institution, which has grown almost universal in this country, of having annual days of thanksgiving to thank the Lord of the harvest for his goodness in providing abundance and plenty, proves in a great degree that the people of this land have truly imbibed a portion of the character of a God-fearing nation; inasmuch as they are ready to acknowledge their dependence upon the great Power by whose *fiat* the world was called into being, the same Power who made himself known to our fathers, and spoke unto Israel from amidst the fire and the darkness.

It is, therefore, a beautiful sight, and a soul-elevating circumstance to a true child of Israel, that the chief magistrates of so many states, seeing that the Lord has blessed the land in his great mercy with whatever can subserve to the well-being of the inhabitants, have recommended this day as a general day of thanksgiving, that all men, laying aside their usual avocations, should resort to their places of worship, and there return their thanks to the Bestower of all the good they enjoy, and to acknowledge their dependence upon the Creator and the Governor of the universe. There is no sectarianism in this humiliation; there is no sectional difference in this general homage to the great first Cause from whom all have sprung: we, therefore, sons of Jacob, who have no hope save in the Lord of heaven and earth, who

know of no saviour except the God of Abraham, can readily unite with our fellow-citizens of other and differing creeds, and hie us to our houses of assembly, and there pour out our expressions of the gratitude which we feel for the many mercies which we have received in common with others, though we be undeserving in the eyes of the Supreme Judge of the world.

Let us survey the whole extent of this vast country: and what does meet our eye? Plenty, in the fullest sense of the word; everywhere the harvest has been abundant, and no thought of famine terrifies the dwellers in even the distant settlements, where civilization is just battling with savage nature, and where the trees are just beginning to fall before the blows of the axe of the enterprising backwoodsman, where not long ago the wily red man ensnared the fox, or hunted the proud buffalo, under whose hoof the wilderness shakes, or entrapped near the lonely stream of the great solitudes the industrious beaver. Gaunt famine, and grim death the result of starvation, may terrify other lands; elsewhere may be heard the moaning of unfed labourers, whose unrequited toil affords them not sufficient for the support of their dependent families; but here food is abundant, and the hand of industry is not palsied by the inadequate supply of nourishment which strengthens the arm, and lends weight to the artisan's hammer, and speeds the plough of him who tills the soil.—Elsewhere people pine under oppression; they fear to labour, because bands of plunderers lurk in bypaths and on the highways, to reap where they sowed not, and to carry off the vintage where they did not prune the vine. But here you may travel whithersoever it be

your pleasure to go; you need not arm yourselves against the thieving Bedouin, or be in dread of the daring Turcoman; but you can intrust your seed to the ground in the almost certain expectation of carrying home your harvest in its proper season, and to store up for your own household the fruits of your industry, with no fear of a tyrant to seize on your persons, and to appropriate to his own use what you have produced for the support of your household.—Elsewhere is heard the din of battle; towns are sacked and villages are burned, and fields are red with the blood of slaughtered armies; in valleys is heard the booming cannon, and mountains reëcho the sound of the deadly artillery; and with fatal aim battalions are ranged against each other, and peace shrieks in agony that her arts are despised, and because man strives in his fury to mar the image of God, which, like himself, his foeman-brother bears within him: whilst in this land, though we hear of war afar off, and many are hastening away to where the phantom which men call glory leads them on to scale fortified walls, and where the bright sword flashes in the shock of hostile hosts, we are dwelling securely with none to make us afraid, and feel none of the horrors of the deadly conflict which inspires our neighbours with fear and with sorrow.—During the past summer season, too, whilst on the confines and the distant towns of this country, the pestilence raged fiercely, and severed rudely the bonds of friendship and the ties of kindred, whilst youth perished prematurely, and manhood sunk in the midst of bright anticipations of a good old age: we have enjoyed here health in a high degree, and there was no cry, no migration in our streets because

of the destroyer; and there, too, where death reaped so great a harvest, the chill blast of autumn, which many look upon with mournful regret, because then the landscape is shorn of its beauty, has chased away the pestilential influence; and those who fled from their homes again return thither, and the haunts of commerce once more are filled with those whom the love of gain even could not detain whilst the terror of death was upon them; and now they speak of the danger as past, and the early fallen are referred to as those whom the grave has already held for a long season.

Do these mercies not call for our gratitude? for our acknowledgment of the goodness of the Supreme Ruler of nature, that He has been so munificent to us the undeserving? For what are we, that we should assume to ourselves the merit of our prosperity? Could we command the harvest? can we keep afar the marauder from our fields? can we ward off the locust and cut-worm from devouring the plants and the leaves of the trees? can we by our wisdom keep away the assaults of war and the terrors of slaughter? can we arrest by our wisdom the arm of tyranny? can we by our medical skill stay the pestilence from reaching us, or arrest its progress after it has invaded our domicils? O, powerless indeed is man! and all his wisdom is as naught when he vauntingly dares to measure himself with the One by whose providence he lives, or by whose will his existence terminates in a moment. Be it therefore joy or sorrow which falls to our lot, let us not imagine that it is our skill which has acquired us the former, or that it is altogether the want thereof which has engendered the latter. It is

freely admitted that it is our duty to employ all our energies, whatever of knowledge and skill we may have, to succeed in any pursuit in which we may engage; but having done so, we cannot for all that say with certainty that we shall not fail; because to insure success is not in human power, but it is solely the gracious favour of God which blesses our energy, and permits our knowledge and skill to have for us beneficial results. Perhaps you may say that the prosperity and the progress of the country are owing to prudent legislation, and the wise constitutional enactments of the sages of the revolutionary struggle, which placed these states high in the scale of the nations of the earth. It is readily admitted that those great men have endeared themselves to posterity more even by their careful provision for the great and general development of the principles of universal liberty, than by their successful and daring resistance to arbitrary power. Nevertheless they were but men, and acted only as dependent agents. Other nations too have had wise and good counsellors, no less devoted to the interests of humanity and their native land. And still the liberties of most countries have been overthrown, and yielded soon to the tyranny of ambitious military leaders; and where freedom is yet the property of the inhabitants, we do not observe the same prosperity which distinguishes this land. You may allege that this is owing to the richness of the virgin soil, to the immense domain which here invites the labour of the farmer, promising him rich returns with comparatively small exertions. Commerce flourishes here, because of the facilities for trade everywhere met with, to the length and depth

of the rivers, to the breadth and extent of the inland lakes, more properly mediterranean seas. All this too will be admitted; but are not all these things the gifts of God, who has cast your lot in such pleasant parts? and whose are the broad acres, and the long rivers, and the vast lakes, but the Creator's, who allowed you to use them? And have not other countries also their fertile soil and noble streams? Nevertheless they are in some instances retrograding from their former eminence, and lapsing again into barbarism, and the cities are turned into ruins, and fruitful fields into solitudes; and of many countries the curious traveller asks in vain concerning the great people that once was there, which built the mighty ruins which he meets with in his search for the remarkable and wonderful. No, brethren; it were idle for us to remove from us the consciousness of a debt due to the Most High for the many favours which we enjoy here, by reducing them to mere results of a wise legislation and the fertility and extent of the soil; for were it not that He had blessed us, all these advantages would have left the same results of vexation and disappointment which we are struck with in our travels through other lands, apparently equally favoured by nature with this republic.

Look at the history of our own ancient commonwealth in Palestine, excelling in fertility and position for commerce any state almost of which we have any records, the legislation of which was the wisest, and the defenders of which were the bravest on whom the sun ever shone; and yet Palestine fell, its laws were abrogated by the arbitrary will of Roman emperors, and the children of that land scattered far away from

their hearths and altars; and our being here now proves how totally the scattering was which overtook our unhappy people. But it was not because our laws were not good, and not because our judges were incompetent, only because we had no longer the favour of Heaven, that all this occurred; and He cast us away from his presence, and drove us out of our heritage, that we might be an evidence how powerless is man if he is without the help of his God. So then let us, the inhabitants of this country, at this age of the world, not imagine that mere natural advantages will establish our prosperity or insure its continuance; that human combinations will save us from the accidents and revulsions* which overthrew the states of antiquity. It would indeed be a dreadful blow to the progress of human freedom, were the experiment at self-government on a large scale to fail in the United States; were the sycophantic advocates of royalty, of the one-man-power, to be able to point to the ruins of this magnificent commonwealth, and descant upon its fall through civil feuds, through the provocation of foreign enemies, through demoralization and injustice. How would the enemies of mankind, and this are all lovers of arbitrary rule, glory to see their croaking of the incompetency of man for freedom verified by the overthrow of the constitutional government in this republic; and yet their predictions are sure to be verified, if you, brethren, among others, do not guard the state against those evils

* The subsequent history of the country has amply proved this; for the wise institutions did not save it from a fratricidal war and its frightful consequences. August, '27

which undermine its prosperity. Do not imagine for one moment that liberty is a native product of these climes, whence she cannot be banished, be the conduct of the citizens what it may. Fatal delusion! woful error! should the majority yield themselves to such vain imaginings. Nothing but justice, a mutual regard for each other's rights, domestic concord and the cultivation of peace with neighbouring nations, can uphold this great country in a state of union and prosperity; for on no other grounds can the people expect the blessing of Heaven to be with them in town and country, and prosper the work of their hands whithersoever they go. But let the crimes, which have destroyed other commonwealths before our day, become universally prevalent in the land; let party-spirit endeavour to stifle the rights of others and prevent the free inquiry in public business which belongs to every free citizen; let demoralization and the love of foreign conquest take the place of simplicity of manners and a contentment with the bounds of the already extended domain: and it requires no prophet to predict that this land will fare as did Palestine and Rome; and the hand of the patriot will be paralyzed in his struggles against foreign aggression; the voice of the counsellor, though uttering the warnings of wisdom, will be unheeded, and dismembered and disunited, these states will be divided and torn by factions, and arbitrary rule or military despotism will usurp the place of a nation strong in its freedom, famous for the universal protection which the poorest even can claim under the shadow of equal laws, made to shield alike the humble from the violence of the rich, and to secure these in the enjoyment of their

justly acquired possessions against the wickedness of the evil-doer.

"But how," you may ask, "are we, individual citizens, to contribute to prevent the evils which have just been sketched? we are but few, and our influence is not likely to be felt among so many millions of beings?" To this I would reply: Let others do as they may, it is yours to foster the virtues which will give stability to the state; you are Israelites, descended from those who first received the law of universal love, the infringement of which was so fearfully avenged on our own forefathers, that the effects of this vengeance are still palpably visible on us, their descendants. Let it then be your study not to defend any act in the public servants which savours of injustice, cruelty, or oppression; and in your private conduct be charitable, tolerant of the failings of your fellow-citizens of whatever creed, strictly honest in all your dealings with your fellow-men, and hesitate not to reprove fearlessly a public wrong whenever you think that you have discovered the same. But above all be religious, in the strictest sense of the word; endeavour to obtain a full knowledge of your duties as men in covenant with God, as descendants from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and let not the freedom you enjoy inspire you with the false and dangerous idea that, in a country like this, and in this remote age, there is the least exemption for you from the positive observances which the Scriptures enjoin. Here, brethren, you are free to pursue your conscientious convictions without molestation from the civil power; there are doubtless some vexatious enactments here and there which bear somewhat heavily on you; but

these will fall by degrees, the more the full equality of all men shall become generally recognized. Notwithstanding however the few exceptional laws, you have ample room for a display of your industrial pursuits as conforming Israelites, and the fullest liberty to exercise the duties of your faith, and to proclaim aloud your doctrines, undismayed by the fear of interference on the part of the state in matters which of right belong to your God alone to judge of. Contribute then, beloved brethren, to the permanence of this Union and the confirmation of its liberties by doing your full share, little as you may deem it, in acting in your capacity of citizens as becomes freemen who know what is right, and scorn to oppress or do injustice to any one, be he high or low, though they have the power; and in your capacity as Jews demean yourselves as may with justice be demanded of those who have been from the first ages of civilization endowed with principles of morality and knowledge of God, which have required and received no amendment amidst all the mutations and trials which have passed over our race.

This is our best thanksgiving,—not merely to utter a few words of praise and spend a day without labour, and to assemble in joyful family-reunions, but to show by our conduct that we are sensible of our dependence on the Most High, and that we omit no opportunity to display a devotion to his will, our unshaken faithfulness to the trust which He confided to us. We "have heard the words of his mouth;" we have received his bounty, partaken largely of his blessings: let then the "words" which have reached us be our guiding-stars in the night of our earthly ex-

istence, the cynosure by which we are to direct our course during our voyage upon the ocean of life to the realms of eternity. So shall we ourselves be accepted as individuals before our exalted Judge, and contribute faithfully to the permanence of the freedom of these states, where the persecuted sons of our people can now find security and refuge, freedom and peace, and may continue to be unmolested up to that glorious time, when war shall not be learned any more, and all oppression shall cease, under the rule of the son of David, whom God will send to redeem the world. Amen.

Kislev 17th. } 5608.
Nov. 25th. }

DISCOURSE XVIII.

JUDAISM AND ITS DOCTRINES.

Thy glory, O Lord! is above the heavens, and in all parts of the universe Thou art the same great, omnipotent Power by whose word all the elements from which the world is framed are kept in union and harmony. In the recesses of the darkest mountain, where the living fire melts solid rocks and the hardest metals, and whence issues the fiery stream which lays waste forests and subverts cities, and in the fathomless height where roll the sun and the stars as luminaries for endless worlds, Thou art the only Guide to thy servant, nature,—the outward order of all things which Thou hast formed. Yet do we

discover thy condescension, unending as Thou art! in that Thou hast ever been mindful of the human race, as those whom Thou hadst destined to bear rule on earth, and hast ever given them light and instruction that they might walk before Thee and be perfect. But especially have we, of the house of Israel, been most signally blessed in our having been called by thy providence to be messengers of thy unity and truth, although we are the smallest of nations; because that Thou hadst loved our forefathers, and because Thou wouldst remember the covenant, which Thou, unending Father! hadst made with the children of the dust. O, how can we thank Thee for this signal goodness? What can we do to merit thy grace? But truly we feel that it is not our righteousness which calls down on us thy grace, nor our wisdom by which we are upheld. Yet do Thou perfect what we humbly begin, and establish our work by thy might and wisdom, that all the ends of the earth may see that thy Name dwells among us, and that we are Thine, as servants and worshippers, and bearers of thy truth. Amen.

Brethren!

We are Jews, as we all acknowledge; about our individual name among the nations of the earth we are all agreed; we are the Israelites of the Scriptures, the Hebrews of the land of Egypt, and the Jews as known in modern times. But if one comes to inquire of different Israelites as to their religious opinions, he will be surprised how many varying views he will find expressed, not indeed as derived from the religion itself, but as coming from the fer-

tile imagination of the various individuals who express them. It is, however, a well-established fact, that Judaism has for centuries up to our time been exceedingly uniform in its principal features; not, that freedom of investigation was interdicted, or that honest difference in many views was not allowed; but that the general ideas which make up the sum of a Jewish system of belief were as nearly as possible uniform and universal among all classes, and, we may freely add, individuals of our people. I will not say that many singular notions were not adopted into the general belief of Israelites, derived from their intercourse with the various peoples among whom they lived, and that these notions were not counter to a sound reason and even against the evident meaning of the Scriptures; for it would be folly to maintain that we are so superior to all children of man in intellect and intuitive knowledge, as to avoid the contagion of popular errors and superstitions on the one side, or to escape on the other the influence of a philosophy which rejects everything as unworthy of confidence, for which we have not the actual experience of our senses. The Israelites are men; and therefore it would be impossible, unless a special miracle were constantly performed for them, that they should remain entirely uninfluenced by what is thought, spoken, and done by those among whom they reside, and whose actions they are compelled to witness daily and hourly, whether they wish to observe them or not. So, then, we may freely say, that we always received an impulse from without either for good or evil, and our character was doubtless materially modified, either refined or hardened, either imbued with

love for the gentiles or a bitter aversion for them, in the same proportion as they exhibited among themselves progress or otherwise, civilization or rudeness, love or hatred* towards ourselves. But with these

* Many enemies of the Jews have been in the habit to hunt up expressions of illiberality which they discover in the Jewish writings, and to exhibit them to the consideration of their readers as the genuine exponents of Jewish feeling towards the gentiles. But it must be a malignant heart which does not discover the real cause for these expressions. What was the whole world to the Jew in the middle-ages up to the end of the eighteenth century? what is it to him now in Russia, in Prussia, in Austria, and wherever he is found in the greatest numbers? He is dealt with in a manner that the brute is treated kindlier in the field than he is. All around him are his enemies; the government oppresses him; the people turn from him in disdain; and the preachers, they who profess to promulgate a religion of peace and good-will to man, fan the flame of hatred towards the rejected of their church. Was this not done by Christians of past ages? is the outrage not repeated in the present enlightened period by those who have the most light? It was also practised by heathens and Mahomedans. Whom then had the Jew to love? No one. Whom had he to fear? All mankind. Is it then to be wondered that he in return hated the world? that he should even think that whatever came into his hand through the error of a gentile was lawfully his? was he not plundered openly, and this daily, by prince and peasant? by bishop and layman? Where then should he get his wealth, the means to satisfy the avarice of his tormentors, but by cunning, trick, and circumvention? And yet he remained the noble, the patient, the hopeful Israelite; he continued kind to his persecutors, and loyal to the land of his oppression; and he sought no private opportunities for revenge, referring his quarrel to God only, asking from Him, who said "Mine are vengeance and recompense," to look upon the rivers of innocent blood that were shed, and to have regard to the tears that flowed in streams down the cheek of the sage and the matron, of the youth and the maiden, of the bridegroom and the bride, in the anguish of their hearts and the constant dread of the sword and rapine which threatened them. And then you wonder that a trace of illiberality is here and there discoverable in the books written

sole limitations, we may boldly assert, that the religious opinions, properly so called, of the Jews, had not undergone the smallest change for many centuries, so far as the records will permit us to decide; since the Scriptures were always the basis of our belief, and since these have not undergone the least change from the moment they were first intrusted to our custody.—The main principles of our belief then, are, first, the existence of God, including his unity, eternity, unchangeability, incorporeality, and sole claim to worship; secondly, the existence of revelation from the God of all nature, including the confidence in the truth of the prophets, especially the great teacher of Israel, Moses the son of Amram, and the certainty that this revelation is yet in our possession, and that it will not be exchanged, and has hitherto not been changed for any other by the Power who bestowed it on us; thirdly, the existence of rewards and punishments, including the inherent power of God to know all that is done in any part of his world by the beings whom He has created; fourthly, the coming of a messenger to be specially deputed by God to fulfil all the promises which have ever been

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under the spur of the agonized spirit which was then so abundant everywhere! that men, though they were Israelites, could learn to hate their enemies! It strikes one as most curious that Jews should blush to find such expressions in their books; on the contrary, it is only to be wondered that they still could teach, "The righteous of the nations of the world are entitled to a share of eternal happiness;" "The Lord does not withhold the reward due to any creature whatever:" were it not that our wise men taught the pure truth to their followers, and felt convinced of the ultimate triumph of the pure faith, as the sincere Hebrew believes now, too, although in many respects his political condition has improved.

made, respecting the regeneration of mankind, and their being ultimately brought to a true knowledge of the Godhead, by which means much especial happiness is to accrue to the people of Israel; and fifthly, the resurrection of the dead, embracing the spiritual perfection of all the intelligent beings that ever emanated from the creative hand of God, and the perpetual abolition of all imperfections, sufferings, sinful inclinations, and death, from the face of the earth, a state in which righteousness shall be supremely rewarded, and guilt be exhibited in its fullest and most hideous complexions.

Now, as all these doctrines have been given to us in general terms, no doubt that different persons always expounded them in somewhat varying colours, or understood them in different limitations. But, despite of the various outward influences which acted upon us; notwithstanding the many changes which came over us during so many centuries, and the many wanderings and expulsions to which we were subjected during all this time, we clung to our creed with the tenacity of affection, and would not yield a single fragment of an idea connected with it, though for so doing we were promised all that men prize high on earth, and our adherence to it subjected us to all that the world calls hardship, sorrow, and degradation. In former years, no one breathed a doubt against the hope of Israel, against the expected coming of the Messiah to lead us again to the holy land, to dwell there in peace and contentment, with God for our King, with the whole world for our confederates; since all are to be subject to the same blessed laws of truth and holiness which we possess. If any one at-

tentively peruses our prayers, those formed in the earliest ages, no less than those composed under the pressure of the terrible persecutions which we had to suffer in Spain and kindred countries, he must be struck with the uniform expectation therein expressed, of a redemption through the son of David, and a restoration of the sacrificial worship at the time of the assembling of the people, when the temple shall again rear its holy presence on Moriah, never more to be destroyed, nor to be defiled by the presence of the unclean and the wicked. Then also he will discover that it formed a part of our liturgy, both in the daily service and the particular prayers used for the solemn festivals, to entreat the Almighty for a conversion of the world to his law, "that the fear of the Lord might be extended over all his works, and his dread over all that He has created, so that all his works may fear Him, and all creatures may bow down before his glory; so that all may form one band, to perform his will with an upright heart, as we his people know already, that his is the dominion, that might is in his hand, and strength in his right hand, and that his Name is tremendous over all that He has created." And again we ask, "that the idols may be utterly destroyed at the speedy coming of the kingdom of God, whereby the world is to be reformed, so that all the children of flesh shall call on his Name, and the wicked of the earth be turned towards Him; and that all the inhabitants of the world may know and understand, that unto Him every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall swear fealty; that before Him they shall kneel and fall down prostrate, and ascribe honour to the glory of his holy Name, whilst they receive the

yoke of his kingdom, and He thus reigns over them for ever and ever." I could easily adduce many more passages to show what our forefathers understood by the coming of the redeemer, as developed in our prayers, the best standard by which to measure the real sentiments of any people which, like us, has written forms by which to address the throne of Grace.

As I have said already, the composition of the prayers extended over a long period of time, probably more than two thousand years; consequently, there is the amplest proof of a uniformity, nay, identity, in the religious opinions of the Jews during all that period, as respects the belief in a redemption. Our fathers knew as well as we do of the existence of Mahomedan and Nazarene creeds; they had seen the various triumphs of the crescent and the cross, and the gradual downfall of the many systems of idolatry which at one time were universal in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the substitution therefor of the doctrines of the man of Mecca, and him of Nazareth. We had in those days men of great intellect, inferior to none in the present age; we had a Judah the chief, author of the Mishnah; a Rab Ashi, the author of the Talmud; a Saadyah Gaon, one of the first translators of the Scriptures into the vernacular language of the country, which to him was the Arabic; a Judah Hallevy, the prince of poets, and next to David, the sweetest hymnologist; an Aben Ezra, great in all the sciences of his day; a Moses of Cordova, universally known as Maimonides, renowned as philosopher, physician, and Talmudist, and versed in all the lore of his age; a Solomon Yitzchaki, famous, for his

comments on the Scriptures and Talmud, as the light of the captivity, under the name of Rashi; and a host of others, who excelled all their contemporaries in wisdom and knowledge. Many of our great teachers were also principal officers at the courts of their sovereigns, and, at one time, nearly every prince had a Jewish physician, so much were our medical men respected and trusted. But did they for one moment falter in their faith? did they fancy salvation to have proceeded from Mecca or Nazareth? Let their writings testify, that they were not misled, and never bowed their pure souls to the inventions of men, but held fast to the standard of the law and the prophets. They saw large empires converted to one system or the other, more rapidly than this takes place in our own days; they beheld the extermination of many idols, which bowed and stooped before the advance of new opinions: yet they saw not in this the regeneration of the world; they felt that the sword was yet the arbiter between mankind, and was often unsheathed to aid the triumph of certain religious dogmas, and not rarely wielded to exterminate dissentients from the popular doctrines. They therefore sighed for the day of the Lord, when He will come in his glory to reign alone on earth, when his truth shall be everywhere acknowledged, and his Name feared by every one. They forgot not Jerusalem in their prosperity, and though surrounded with honour and ease, they composed many of those elegiac hymns which even now touch a chord of anguish in our hearts, as they make us weep over the sanctuary of God, into which the enemy forced his bloody way, and for the sons of Jacob that fell by the sword. These glorious men

compromised not their belief by an exposition thereof, to suit either kind or tyrannical rulers, as the case may have been; at the council-board of royalty they beheld a brighter throne for David erected in the restored Jerusalem, and under the hoofs of the horse of a murderous Arabian* they beheld the fields of Judah covered with flocks of men, and the streets of the holy city crowded with playful boys and maidens, shouting in the innocent glee of their early years, unterrified by the powers of the adversary, who will exist no more. And when they languished in the dungeon of an Inquisition appointed to exterminate their faith, their beatified vision revelled in the overthrow of that abominable system which required their blood as its sacrifice, and they saw the prison-house levelled to the earth, and its builders and supporters, its judges and executioners cowering in the dust before the Lord's elect, and they gazed on the priests of Heaven, robed in white, and burning with intense devotion to the Father of Israel, again surrounding the altars, to bring thereon sacrifice and incense. And when they stood before the burning pile, with the impatient crowd watching in eagerness till the headsman obtained the fearful command to tie

* Alluding to the death of R. Judah Hallevy, who went to Jerusalem to visit the Holy City, the downfall of which he had so beautifully and touchingly lamented in his elegies; and then, whilst chaunting barefoot one of his own hymns, an infuriated Arab rode over him, and trod him to death under the hoofs of his horse.—Late writers refute this romantic termination of the great poet's life; but for centuries it was current, and believed in, though probably fictitious, if at the time he went to Palestine the city of Jerusalem was in the hands of the Crusaders. May his tormentor not have been a knight of Europe, instead of an Emir of Arabia?

the sainted martyrs to the accursed stake, their soul rose above the din and tumult of the world, and, superior to death, it conquered all fear and trembling, and they feasted their sight on the assemblage of the thousands of the faithful who will, at the time which is coming, hasten again to the temple of the Lord, to the city where He will again cause his Name to dwell, and whence are to go forth the law and the word of God to all sons of men.

Were all these great men deceived? were their hopes but the vision of a night? their fond anticipations but the baseless fabric of a dream, or the fevered fancy of delirium? No, it cannot be; their words bear too much the stamp of sober earnestness,—of deep conviction; and they endured too much ever to have yielded themselves to anything but the certain persuasion, that theirs was the faith which emanated from the wisdom of God. And thus armed, they cared not what happened to them; was it life, was it death, was it ease, was it exile, it was of no importance to these devoted servants; they were but fulfilling their destiny, as pointed out to them by the unerring finger of Providence, and they followed cheerfully the heavenly guidance, convinced that in the kingdom of their Father there would be ample reward for them, and for all who had trusted on to the last.

But these saints now sleep in the dust of the earth, joyfully awaiting their awakening from the grave to an immortal glory, and the fulfilment of their dearest hopes. And there have arisen men in our day, who wish for "no portion in David, and no inheritance in the son of Jessé;" who desire to reduce all our hopes

to square with the views of tyrannical rulers, or to please states by their pretended identity of opinions. These men wish to strike out from our prayers all allusions to the restoration of the sacrifices, or the anticipated return of liberated Israel to their ancient domain. These men look for an ideal kingdom of God, wherein our nation is quietly to expire in the universal prevalence of a purified religion. These men wish not to see Israel restored; they ask for no greater happiness than to be regarded as entitled to a few offices in the respective states, and to be placed on a legal equality with the other citizens. They claim as their country exclusively that wherein they were born, or in which they live; and they imagine, or profess to believe, that the hope of a restoration must clash with our duties as citizens or subjects of the various potentates under whom we live protected and at peace. Such erroneous opinions are boldly propounded, and diversified under a vast variety of peculiar shadings, to correspond with the greater or less degree of Jewish feeling yet inherent in the respective reformers, as they style themselves. But, if it were true that the belief in a restoration of temple, people, sacrifices, and the kingdom, implied, necessarily, hostility to the various states in which we sojourn, it would follow, as a matter of course, that our forefathers must have been enemies to all the world, by their pertinacity in adhering to their opinions; and hence our enlightened men, as they love to style themselves, the men of progress and of light, become the most obsequious defenders and apologists of all the cruel oppressors who have so multifariously laboured against our creed, by the slaughter, and ban-

ishment, and oppression of those who would not relinquish it at their bidding.

To judge from the vehemence which one occasionally sees exhibited, when it is hinted that the real belief of the Jew is his national restoration, he would come to the conclusion that a more pernicious doctrine never was entertained by any class of human beings; that it is absolutely a hideous monster, against the approach of which we ought to guard ourselves by all the contrivances of modern science, and which we must deny with the bold effrontery of confirmed infidelity. But it requires no argument to prove that all this denial of Judaism has its source in the meanest of human failings, and that it is owing either to infidelity, an entire indifference to religion, or an obsequious yielding of conviction for the sake of flattering secular power, to wheedle it out of some tangible benefit, which otherwise would be denied to the professing Jew. How differently did the great ones of antiquity act! with how much self-devotion and forgetfulness of all personal interest did they acknowledge their convictions, let the consequences be what they might! and it is precisely this love for things of the world which has caused so much destruction among us, and brought about the painful exhibition of open profanity and shameless sinning which so much characterize our age.—I have stated before, that the progress of science all over the world, not among us alone, has produced a great revolution in opinions, and ideas once acquiesced in, and beliefs once firmly entertained, have faded before the light of investigation, which proved their unsoundness. So also were many ideas once common among us, super-

stitious notions I mean, borrowed by degrees from surrounding influences, the silent inroads of which we could not resist, again silently dropped as not compatible with reason and religion, and before long they will not be known any more as ever having had a place in the minds of Jews. But the wicked and the thoughtless have taken advantage of this circumstance, and they have dared to treat as an antiquated error whatever stands in their way and opposes their interests, or that which their limited intellect cannot comprehend, and which their vain-glorious philosophy places in the category of impossibilities. But it must be evident to every child even that, if religion is nothing more than a system changeable with every change in refinement and scientific progress or retrogression, it cannot be an emanation from Heaven. It is true that it has been confided to mankind for their use and employment, and hence little matters may change with the times, which fact will be clearly reconcilable with the Mosaic code when correctly viewed. But to assert that *time* has any legitimate business with principles or great observances, would, as said, destroy religion totally as a safe guide on the path of morals and belief, which we all feel the necessity of possessing. If the progress of society in civilization justifies the removal of all that men do not find to accord with their own notions of advance in all things: it follows as a legitimate deduction, that if society retrogrades, which it frequently has done, and may do again, then all the superstitions and cruelties resulting from a perverted view of duty will become again justifiable; in other words, that whatever is done by public assent, this being the standard

of social opinion, is just and proper, be this the folly of the Crusaders, the bloody wars of Mahomed and Charlemagne, for the propagation of their creeds, or the wholesale butcheries of the Inquisition in the faith ordered and recognized as legitimate by the decrees of many Roman pontiffs. But, I imagine, that the wildest claimant for the right of progress will not say that such acts were ever justifiable, and that the most we can assert is that the perpetrators thereof are to be pitied for their blind ignorance, since they were through mistaken views guilty of heinous crimes in the name of religion. Religion itself, however, has never justified any act of barbarity, and at all times there were those who inveighed against the deeds which were wrought within their knowledge, by an appeal to that very code in the name of which the outrages were committed. Now, taking this sober and candid view of the question, we must deny any right of appeal to the spirit of the age as a valid excuse to remodel our religion, upon the arbitrary basis thus attempted to be forced upon us. We want something far more stable than the visionary notion of every one who has skill enough to write a book, or power of speech to preach a sermon; we want a more permanent support for our light to futurity, than the mad schemes of some disappointed worldling who, because he cannot be a Rabbi among the Jews, is ready to become grand inquisitor among their oppressors. But we need not search far for this stable basis, this permanent support, this unfading light; for it is already with us, in those Holy Scriptures which we have in our possession, and which have been watched over with more than maternal

solicitude by the Israelites, in all their sorrows, in all their exiles; and what they declare to be right, has ever been our law, has ever formed the matter which we called our belief; and, whatever may be alleged to the contrary, the Scriptures alone have always constituted the Jewish religion, and nothing opposed to them can be regarded as of any weight whatever. If this is the truth, and there can hardly be any doubt on that point, it follows that there is a standard, superior to the spirit of any age, which requires no change nor amendment with every discovery or newfangled notion which makes its appearance before the world. Now, upon the basis of Scripture do we rest our belief in a redeemer, not upon the mere imaginings of any eminent man of any age, nor upon the scientific discoveries of a college of learned experimentalists. Look at the prophecies from one end of the Bible to the other, and all speak of a change in the affairs of mankind, and of Israel in particular, which has not been witnessed to this hour, and which, nevertheless, the course of events clearly points out as certain to arrive.

I have detained you so long already to-day, that I must omit the discussion of the details for a future occasion; and merely finish at present, with a positive announcement of the restoration, which is found in the Haphtorah of to-day, from Ezekiel xxxvii. The prophet was ordered to explain, by the union of two pieces of wood, which he was to exhibit to the people, the future union of the rival kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim, which both had ceased to exist at the time the prophecy was spoken. Ephraim now is lost, and the tribes associated with him are not known among

us. Judah is scattered, and fills the whole world with his fugitives. And yet we are promised that they shall become one people on the mountains of Israel, under the rule of one king. And then shall they no more be chargeable with sin and transgression; because, when gathering them from all their dwelling-places, God will himself cleanse them from guilt, and they shall be his people. And he says in continuation, verse 24:

ועבדי דוד מלך עליהם ורועה אחד יהיה לכלם
ובמשפטי ילכו וחקותי ישמרו ועשו אותם :
יחז' לו' כד' :

"And my servant David shall be king over them; and one shepherd shall be for them all; and in my ordinances they shall walk, and my statutes they shall observe and do them."

This is the future of which the prophet speaks, and this is the Messiah, the King David, the one shepherd whom we are told to expect. Shall we believe in the God who has so long guarded us, or shall we cease to be Jews for worldly gain, or from unbelief? Decide for yourselves, brethren, and sure I am that, ultimately, enlightened faith will triumph over worldliness, and we shall all march under the same banner which waved over our fathers, and that we shall continue as the people of God, and merit at length his mercy. Amen.

Tebeth 10th. } 5608.
Deeb'r 17th. }

DISCOURSE XIX.

THE PERPETUITY OF JUDAISM.

O Thou, who hast redeemed us and our fathers from slavery unto freedom, and from darkness unto a great light! be with us also this day, and let the light of thy countenance shine unto us that we may be blessed, as our fathers were blessed, with a knowledge of the things which concern our immortal happiness, and that knowing our duty we may learn to subdue the evil propensity of our nature, and only do that which is declared lawful in the words of thy law. O, inspire our heart with wisdom, that we may be able to distinguish between the true and the false, between the doctrines which are from Thee, and those which are merely the devices of men, the inventions of deceit and cunning, by which many are withdrawn unto the paths of sin. Yes, guard us, as a father guards his son, and ward off the shafts of evil which are scattered through the world, and grant us opportunities that we may render ourselves worthy of thy favour, which is the portion of those who have done thy will. Amen.

Brethren!

We read in Exodus, xii. 14:

והיה היום הזה לכם לזכרון וחגתם אתו חג לה׳
לדרתיכם חקת עולם תחגהו : שמות יב׳ יד׳ :

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall celebrate it as a feast in honour of the Lord; throughout your generations, as a perpetual statute shall ye celebrate it."

This verse is found in connexion with the institution of the Passover, and speaks plainly of the perpetuity of the celebration, as a memorial of the great mercy which God displayed at the time the ordinance was given to the Israelites, in breaking asunder the yoke of their servitude and letting them go free, relieved from the dread of their taskmasters, no longer fearing the tyranny of Pharaoh and his equally guilty people.—We have heard so much about a new dispensation, about relieving the world from the burden and the curse of our law, as our opponents have dared to call the service of the Lord as indicated in his holy Scriptures, that we are surely at liberty, without offence to any one, to examine into the pretensions of this new system, which men endeavour to force upon us, either by violence or by flattery, either by threats or specious appeals and pretended argument. If our opponents may be believed, the Lord first gave a law, selecting Israel as its bearers, and then repealed it without any public declaration to that effect, and rejected Israel from being any farther his people, because they could not believe that the Blessed Creator had sent a messenger, to contradict his own revelation which He had imparted to them through Moses. If we, however, take a simple view of the term divine revelation, it will appear at once that it has a peculiarity of meaning which distinguishes it from a human declaration of will. A man to-day is in a particular frame of mind, either cheerful by the possession

of good health, and the successful attainment of some enterprise, or depressed by being unwell, or thwarted in his expectations; whereas, on the morrow he may feel very differently, the circumstances under which he acted the previous day being different. It may also happen that in the meantime he has acquired more knowledge, and is therefore not alone able, but compelled to take a different view of the subject on which he is to decide; and hence must arise an uncertainty, a mutability in regard to whatever is brought under the direction of the human mind, whether this be in one or in many individuals acting or acted on in concert. But how does it stand with regard to the mind of the Almighty? Is He diseased to-day and well to-morrow? do his plans succeed in one year and fail in another? are in this age his faculties limited, and do they become more expanded in a succeeding one? Who gave Him counsel when He called the world into being? who advised Him when he set limits to earth and sea? And when He came in his glory, like unto a king who appears before his subjects to receive their homage, to teach to Israelites and mankind the statutes of his will,—where was his want of experience, where his insufficiency of knowledge, that it needed the progress of ages, the light of experimental sciences, the march of discovery, to enlighten his ignorance? Say, has his wisdom become enlarged, because forsooth we of the present day have more objects the produce of science than former generations had? The very proposition proves its absurdity; it would be insulting to reason to adduce arguments to establish that the Most Perfect cannot be farther perfected, and that the Most Wise cannot

augment in wisdom, through the aid of those to whom He imparts the wisdom and the power of understanding which they possess.—If then we are told of a better system than ours as coming from God, one of two things must necessarily be the case: either that He had at first not the requisite knowledge to enable Him to come to a correct conclusion with regard to what is and ought to be right, or that He causelessly changed his intentions with regard to one or more particulars from an arbitrariness of disposition, without any just reason arising from an acquisition of new knowledge rendering such a change necessary. Now, in what light would either assumption exhibit the blessed and unchangeable, the omniscient and most holy God? Precisely as you would figure to yourselves a human being swayed by want of information, and governed by caprice; either of which would reduce Him to the level of a finite creature, subject to all the imperfections and infirmities which we discover in our own nature.

If we now look into the Scriptures, even if our reason were insufficient to represent to us the Holiest without blemish, and as not liable to accidents of whatever kind: we shall discover that the Bible-doctrine is one which exactly corresponds with the result of our own reflection. Bileam in his enraptured prophecy exclaimed, "God is not a man that he should lie, and not a son of man that he should repent." Moses said, "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; and He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them." "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord

our God, that it may be well with us all the days, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day." "For the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as He rejoiced over thy fathers: if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou returnest unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul." "He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are just: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and righteous is He." If these several selections from the law have any meaning at all, they assert positively that in the Lord and in his law there can be no change, and that as He is from the beginning, before any creature had any existence, so is his principle of right and justice eternal, one and uniform; because He being just and merciful, upright and true, the attributes thus sanctified are a part of his being, and are therefore inseparable from Him in all ages of the world and in every stage of existence.

When therefore we obtain a commandment from the Lord, and are told it shall be a perpetual sign of the covenant between God and man, between God and Israel: we are certified that through every age of the world, in whatever place we are, and under whatever circumstances we may be found, we are bound to believe in the truth of the ordinance, and to conform to it in letter and spirit. We have then also no power conferred on us to reason on its propriety or to limit it to circumstances, short of a prevention through actual and insurmountable necessity, where physical incapacity, or external force which we cannot resist, hinders us in the performance of our duty.

Because so soon as we know that a thing is from God and conformable to his wisdom, it becomes evidently the business of our life to learn herein submission to the will of Him who gave us life, and to yield the result of our reasoning to the mandate of Him who alone endowed us with knowledge. There is accordingly no time which we can imagine as absolving us from our allegiance to the law, in the words of the eighth and ninth articles of our creed, "I believe with a perfect faith that all the law which is now found in our possession, is the same that was given to our blessed teacher Moses. I also believe with a perfect faith that this law will not be exchanged, nor will there be another law from the Creator, whose name be blessed." For as believers in the purity of God and his perfection in wisdom and knowledge, we cannot admit that He has left the world without a thorough acquaintance with their duty, or that He has or will alter that which He ordained as a law for everlasting.

Let us now revert to the words of our text: "And this day" (meaning the Passover) "shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall celebrate it as a feast in honour of the Lord; throughout your generations, as a perpetual statute shall ye celebrate it." What does this mean? but that the whole succession of generations of Israelites should celebrate, as a memorial of what God had wrought in behalf of their ancestors, the identical fifteenth day and the next six succeeding days of the spring-month in every future year, to acknowledge that they believe truly and firmly, that through the display of an irresistible power the Lord had liberated the bondmen of Pharaoh from a thral-

dom from which no earthly exertions could have freed them, and that He had given them his commandments, by observing which they might in truth be properly termed the servants of the Most High. The very term Most High, just used, calls up in our soul the idea of the utmost conceivable superiority; imagine any being ever so high, exalted, great and powerful, still our God would be above him, He being high in the most eminent degree. Our keeping then of the Passover was intended to exhibit our faith in the unlimited power of the Godhead, to rule in all the earth and over the whole range of the universe, though this should consist of millions on millions of worlds, existing through millions on millions of centuries, whilst at the same time He takes cognizance of all that is done in any part of his vast domain without fatiguing his vision or exhausting his strength, or being wearied in his watchfulness, and lessening his energy. We are to testify that we keep the Passover to honour the Lord, because He has so commanded us,—not that we can thereby repay Him for his goodness, not that we can by the ceremonial observances of the season secure to us any particular worldly advantage, or claim as our right especial favours from Him; but only to confess that we are willing to be guided by our Benefactor, and to follow strictly his teaching, thereby hoping to obtain his approbation; because, and only because, He has promised that such obedience, however little it may be in itself, should secure to us the mercy of Him our Father who is in heaven.

The object of the commandment of the Passover is then twofold: the first, the glorification of the Lord,

through which means truth will be best established on earth, and secondly, the beatitude of the subjects of his mighty kingdom. With the Lord for the solely acknowledged Sovereign of the earth, with the universal acceptance of his revelation as the basis of human conduct, there will be no room for false belief, no space for the exercise of violence and wrong. When all the world fully and truly acknowledge that to our Father belongs the dominion, that He alone rules wherever his eye penetrates, that He needs and has no associate to affect his will: there will evidently be no cause for the widely differing views concerning the Power to be worshipped, which now prevail over the earth. There will be no need then for colleges of learning and cumbrous volumes to expound who and what God is; for the simple words of our creed will explain all that is now mystified by comments on comments, and by flimsy ingenuity heaped upon productions of the same kind. The words of the law, which we repeat daily and on so many occasions of our life, are "The Lord our God is alone the Lord," or as literally rendered, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is one; emphatically declaring a simple and a perfect unity, in whom there is no conceivable division, nor any imaginable aggregation of parts from without; He who is in good truth the One, like whom none does exist, nor can exist in all the extent of the universe. Now in honour of this One we are told to celebrate a perpetual festival; let other men worship each his own god, let other men follow each the law which he deems divine and true: it matters not to us, for we walk in the name of the living God and the King of everlasting. With each returning spring

we renew the celebration of his power; we gratefully acknowledge that we are debtors to the same unchanging One who watched over us in ages gone by, and who still keeps his providence extended over us, so that we are not consumed in the lands of our opponents. We testify that though changes innumerable have come over the earth, we, the sons of Jacob, not having been consumed, stand in the same relation to Him as we did from the beginning, and the unleavened bread is eaten in our houses, the bitter herbs are taken as a memorial of our captivity, and the leaven is removed as an evidence of our willingness to obey the behests of God, although new and enlightened nations have arisen in the lapse of centuries, have kindled their lamp by the blazing fire of Sinai, and now pretend to have received a new instruction from God which He has not imparted to us directly. But if even the Holy One could have changed; if even his mind had undergone the vacillation of humanity: still we would reject any pretended new revelation which has not the publicity of Sinai. There He came down in clouds of glory, and an entire people exclaiming "We will do and obey" received the precepts in words simple and intelligible to the commonest understanding, words, which then spoken to men just liberated from slavery, are to this hour unsurpassed in cogency and truth, and to which no philosophy, or high-learned theology, or discovery in the art of government has been able to add one single letter as an improvement or amplification. We were then told that we should observe whatever other precepts the Lord might write down for our instruction, and we promised to Him, through

his accredited messenger, that we would for ourselves and our posterity forever strictly follow all the divine instructions thus received through Moses, as though we had heard them with our own ears proceeding from the mouth of Almighty Power. Now the least that could have been done to absolve us from this solemn compact, would have been an announcement equally well authenticated from amidst the fire of glory, that a new law had been given, the old law being thereby repealed and of no farther binding force. But well may we ask to be shown a tittle of evidence, that any such abrogation ever took place; that any one man even professing to be inspired by God ever taught a revocation of the principles of duty as laid down in the law. Ask your opponents where they find a law of morality, separate and distinct from the Pentateuch? ask them in what volume is the ordination of the Sabbatic institution? of chastity? of restitution of stolen property? in short of all the distinguishing features of civilized life by which it is elevated above barbarism and idolatry? Curse of the law! do you call our observances? Pray, tell us where are the blessings which the denial thereof produces? where do you find the support for all the institutions which confer a blessing on society, except in the pages which ordain likewise our ceremonial observances? It will not do to separate the moral from the strictly religious ordinances; for though they are distinct in their character, the divine displeasure denounced for their infraction is threatened as much in the one as the other case. The distinction therefore attempted to be thus created, is quite arbitrary, and against every principle of correct inter-

pretation; since the law of God itself makes no marked difference in the sanctity of the purely moral and the purely ceremonial laws.—Grant then the possibility that the Lord could change his religion, and that the ceremonial law had been repealed, and assume that this assertion should rest upon the best possible evidence, all of which assumption we thoroughly deny: the question would still arise, "In what manner have the ten commandments been re-enacted after the repeal of the other portions of the law? in what way were the moral laws reinstituted after the Pentateuch was declared as no longer of any binding force?"

I know not, indeed, how others, in the main agreeing with me in my religious persuasion, may view the characters and doctrines of those who taught in opposition to our law. But to me it appears, that no matter if they were the best men the world ever saw; say even that they exceeded Moses in piety and knowledge of divine things; that they arose as messengers of God to reform the world; assume, in short, the highest character you please, however incompatible with revelation, with truth, with history, and with common sense: we as Jews have not the remotest right to yield the smallest portion of our observance in favour of any doctrine or argument, which can be derived from their teaching, their writings, or their example. I speak not now of any particular kind of belief; but I include all which have been hitherto developed, and which still threaten to astonish or stultify the world, before the final triumph of truth, of reason, and revelation, shall be witnessed universally on God's earth, on that day when the Lord shall alone be acknowledged, and his Name shall be adored

as ONE by all spirits. We cannot compromise for a small portion of foreign doctrines, but must reject them all, let them come from what quarter they may, and though so various and diverging views are entertained by many enlightened persons, all claiming, and no doubt sincerely so, that they are right. We as Jews can have but one standard; not even mere human reason and the results of progression in sciences can affect us; we are a people created as such solely by the Bible, and to that standard we must submit, let the world say what they will, unless they can show that there is any authoritative repeal which would absolve our conscience from any farther allegiance to the revelation contained in the Scriptures. But so far from all this being the case, all enlightened persons admit the superior morality and force of the word of God; and whilst denying the ceremonial obligations, they claim as a precious right whatever else they find therein, prizing it as the richest possession which the Lord could possibly bestow on man. And still we are denounced as infidels and unbelievers for the highest exercise of faith and truth, in hoping unfalteringly in the perfection of God's words and promises! True, we cannot share the belief of the vast majorities of the inhabitants of the world; in England, in Tartary, in China, in Hindostan, in Nigretia, and the Republics of America, we testify against the truth of the popular beliefs; but not because we are particularly concerned about their various religions, but only because we have received ourselves a religion which we prize as the highest truth, and which we must continue to regard in that light, let other men believe what they may. It is a

popular error, and an error notwithstanding it is so generally entertained, that Jews are particularly hostile to one system of the gentiles or the other, and the ruling majorities in various countries debate fiercely, whether according to their peculiar principles they can admit the Jews to a participation of the rights of man notwithstanding their belief, as they fancy that there is something injurious to the state to be feared in letting a Jew have the privileges which he claims as his own. But if mankind would only consider that we are not Israelites out of opposition to them, but only because we have received a religion founded upon universal love, based upon universal wisdom, and that nothing we can do as Jews but would conduce to the benefit of all the world: they would surely cease to injure and oppress us, as has been the custom too much hitherto. Our viewing all religions except ours as more or less erroneous concerns in nowise the personal rights of others; but it only confers on us the obligation to remain steadfast in our observances, notwithstanding others teach that they have been abolished in the establishment of an alleged new revelation, of which we have no sufficient knowledge, and which we cannot admit as true with the evidence presented to us.—It may then happen that we may be looked upon by those differing from us with distrust and jealousy, because we will not yield our conviction to their appeals; but let us remain undismayed, we are still in possession of the same faith with which Moses and the Israelites of his day were blessed; it was true when we alone knew of an eternal God, and it continues to be so notwithstanding so many nations have learned in a

measure to know the God who made heaven and earth. But, brethren, the struggle is not, therefore, ended, and we must even suffer the contumely, if there be any, for being distinguished from the gentiles; and let us boldly then bear the testimony which we have always done, that our Lord is the sole Creator and saving Power, and that it is only in obedience to his will that we continue to observe the annual Passover and other ceremonies as memorials to everlasting, and to prove that we are not wearied to wait for his kingdom, and that we hope for his salvation, and the kindling of the great light which is to fill all the earth with the knowledge of the pure truth, as the waters cover the bed of the sea; and on that day we shall be joined by all flesh in the adoration of the One and only Supreme in sincerity and holiness. Amen.

Shebat 9th. } 5608.
Jan'y 14th. }

DISCOURSE XX.

MODES OF WORSHIP.

O OMNIPOTENT and omnipresent God, who art infinite in space and unending in time! we invoke thy presence in the midst of the assemblies of thy people Israel, whenever they meet to call on thy exalted Name, which is excellent in all the earth. The worlds, numerous as they are, exist and revolve in Thee; Thou didst call them forth from the depth of non-existence, and they stood fast, immovable to

eternity, except by thy will destroyed; and there was no stranger gods with Thee, to counsel Thee or to share with Thee the work of creation. And nevertheless Thou willest that thy servants should build unto Thee a sanctuary, the labour of their hands, and Thou vouchsafest to accept of their work, and Thou blessest those who there ask for thy aid and blessing. O, be with us then, and grant unto us, in answer to our prayer, the aid which we need, and fulfil in us the promise implied in the words of thy messenger, "But ye who adhere unto the Lord your God, are alive, all of you, this day." Amen.

Brethren!

The idea of worship is extremely natural to man. He feels himself powerless, and beholds all around him evidences of the existence of a Being mightier far than he is, and hence he feels impelled, by the very weakness inherent in him, to seek the aid and protection of Him whom he justly deems as powerful to save. Since, however, the attention is in general too much distracted by surrounding objects, and as interruptions in the intercourse with the family, or on the public highways, are too numerous to allow the mind to be properly abstracted: it has been from time immemorial the custom of mankind to erect separate structures, and to dedicate them formally for the worship of what they thought the power able to help them, or, in other words, their God, and they performed therein those rites and acts which they deemed justly or unjustly calculated to propitiate their respective deities. Ceremonies and postures, which would appear unbecoming and onerous if per-

formed and exhibited in the family-circle, assumed a position and propriety in the public temple; and hence, even were there no other source, arose by degrees the peculiarities attending public worship in the houses especially dedicated for this purpose. But it is not to be supposed that all men would agree in their ideas as to what should make up the sum of the peculiarities of their worship, and they have always differed in proportion to the views they entertained of the nature and power of the Godhead. Hence they who believed in a multitude of powers among whom they, though falsely, conceived the superintendence of the various functions of the world were divided, required a multitude of temples, groves, or secluded grottos, adapted to the peculiarities of the various divinities, each of whom had his especial ceremonies, emblems, and decorations, and not rarely a particular order of attendants, either male or female, to perform the obligatory ceremonies appertaining to the place. If you look a little into any book treating of the antiquities of Egypt, Italy, or Greece, the matter will be perfectly clear to you; and you will then understand how the sea, or its tutelary divinity, the sky, the earth, and every visible object, and the invisible causes which control our life, as wisdom, fortune, love, discord, peace, and the like, were all represented under some outward shape, with peculiar symbols, and were supposed to inhabit peculiar localities, where they might be most readily approached, and they had also each their worship, sacrifices, and attendant priests and priestesses, as was thought most conformable to their especial characteristics. And even since the heathenish rites of

these various countries have yielded to the progress of enlightenment, since their temples fell and their idols stooped before new systems which far exceed them in beauty and truth: their errors have not totally vanished, and many of the false ideas especially derived from them have descended down to our day, among nations who vaunt of a knowledge of things superior to what they allege to exist in Israel. It is true no churches are now erected to the sun or the moon, to fortune or to wisdom; but they are nevertheless called by certain names derived from some peculiar imagined manifestation of the godhead, or even after men who are presumed according to the common assumption to have obtained during their lifetime a high state of sanctity, and have been hence enrolled by the judgment of fallible mortals on a list of beatified souls, who are vainly supposed to have a certain influence with the deity whom they invoke. Those of you who have been in foreign lands, and all of you who have taken the least trouble to be informed concerning what is done abroad, or even under your own observation near the doors of your own dwellings, must be able to call to mind the amplest confirmation of what I now state to you; and farther it will be apparent, upon a slight inspection of the customs of some of our neighbours, that they have borrowed another feature from ancient paganism, in the establishment of orders of ascetics, with peculiar dresses, manners, vows, and vocations, named after some presumed manifestation of divine persons, or some accredited saint, who first instituted the respective order with its characteristic and distinctive features. Then we shall see these saints or

manifestations represented by the chisel of the sculptor or the pencil of the painter, in all imaginable varieties of position and colour, and we shall find even these dead and meaningless figures obtaining a consideration which mere marble and canvas, or gold and silver images, ought in no manner to receive; and even more yet we shall discover, to shock our ideas of what is worshipful, in the well-known fact that immense importance has been and is still attached to fancied relics of certain implements of torture and the remains of the bodies of departed saints. It is nothing libellous which I utter; but sober facts, which are verified by an inspection of the manners of the most enlightened nations of the present day; and the many elegant structures, under the names of churches, cathedrals, chapels, convents, and monasteries, and the vast collections of works of art, in stone, in metal, in wood, and in ivory, in painting and sculptures, in shrines and in reliquaries, all viewed with veneration and respect by those who put faith in them, amply testify to the truth of what is stated. It is true that they profess to have no respect for the particular objects as things to be adored, and that they only view them as materials for reflection, leading to an adoration of the Godhead; but they cannot deny, at the same time, that they value the symbols as something holy, and would regard their violation as meriting condign punishment* by the arm of the civil power. If we now take cognizance of

* Indeed, many of our people have been put to death for the fancied crime of maltreating the sacramental wafer of the church. Shocking, indeed, but too true.

this outward symbolism, coupled with the institution of the various orders of male and female priesthood, each of them bound by some peculiar oath or obligation, in consequence of which they are compelled to perform duties not belonging to other men and women, or held to abstain from many indulgences lawfully allowed to other persons: it will be apparent that much of what was originally derived from heathen manners of worship, and pagan ideas about propitiating the gods, has passed over into the manners of our own age, and is, for all that we can see, likely to continue in force for an indefinite time to come; for though it seemed at one period that superstition was fast waning from the earth, recent developments have, alas! proved that the battle for what is true and holy will have to be fought again in our day, and even after we are gone, so far as a mortal's reason will allow us now to see into the future.

But it is with our mode of worship as with our moral duties; for, as these are established on a firm basis simply by the command of God, so is the especial obligation, naturally springing up in the human breast to show by outward acts the inward devotion, sanctified and limited by the instruction which God gave to our teacher Moses. Let us well understand the nature of duty. It is to do that which is demanded of us; hence in doing what is *not* required we may act pleasingly to our divine Father, but we fulfil no duty; since the particular act in question is nowise obligatory on us, and can only be considered meritorious, inasmuch as it may contribute to the glory of God and the well-being of the human family, whom to serve and love is next to the love of God our first

obligation. Still as religion is something specific, it is evident that all that is not prohibited is not therefore lawful; especially if it is attempted to enforce an act on others as a duty, and when its adoption is urged along with other especial ordinances which are the peculiar province of religion. I do not now refer to any particular matter, but to the general idea of duty, and I wish then to define it as that which God demands of us, or permits us to do in his blessed revelation. Now we are not commanded in so many words that we should pray or ask the aid of the Lord; but the history of the great ones of former ages is given to us, and it is announced at the same time that their entreaties were accepted on High as a propitiatory offering to the Supreme. In one instance it is said—I refer to the case of Abimelech—that Abraham should pray for him, that he might live; and this with the example of other saints gives us accordingly the assurance, that the natural impulse which we feel in the moments of our helplessness to call on the Almighty for assistance is both proper and efficacious; and hence we may lawfully include the regular recitation of prayers as a duty incumbent on us all the days of our life, since there is not a moment in our existence, when we are able to proceed in our course without the blessing of Him who lets the sun shine by day, and the moon and stars by night, whose are the earth and all that fills it, the sea and its vast domain, the Lord of Hosts is his name. It results hence, that if prayer is a part of our duty, it is not so merely once in a long while when the pressure of circumstances pinches us, and compels us for the nonce to acknowledge a Supreme Power, but every day of

our life, when we enjoy his bounty or feel afflicted by his chastisement.

When therefore we had been redeemed from Egypt, and God had made himself manifest to our outward senses in the bestowal of the Decalogue, He at once divested our mind of any specialty of time or place when and where He was to be worshipped. It was not told us to wait asking for mercy till we arrived at a certain spot, or till the approach of a particular moment of time; but we were simply informed, "In whatever place I shall permit my name to be mentioned, will I come and bless thee;" be it on the mountain-top, or in the caverns of the earth, in the field or the columned temple, it is all the same: we call on the great and adorable Name, and He will be there and bless us with his favour; for as God is universal, his power everywhere, and his providence watching in every spot: so will his goodness be near to help those who have no aid but their invisible King, who unseen by all, and felt by everything that has breath, is nigh at hand to lift up those who are bowed down, and to open the bonds of those who are enfettered. In no stronger manner could the Almighty have annihilated with a single phrase all the baseless fabrics of heathenism, which assigned special habitations to its different gods, and demanded often unnatural and absurd rites and sacrifices to propitiate the capricious demons of its invention. With God it was and is every place, and with Him it is the mention of his name; and both these requirements are in the power of every human being to satisfy, and thus he can worship every moment and at every place.

Nevertheless we were told at the same time to erect

unto God an altar of earth, to sacrifice thereon any offering which we might voluntarily offer up to Him, according to the example of our patriarchs; for except the Passover-lamb no other sacrifice had been demanded of us at the time the law was given; thus denoting that, though the Lord is universal, we are authorized to consecrate to Him certain places, as especially devoted to his service. But the simplest material was asked; no elaborate work of art, no sculptured statuary, no flaunting pictures were to decorate the altar; "an altar of earth shalt thou make unto me;" and if perchance we might desire to erect one of stone, it was limited to rude blocks as they are taken from the earth, for the iron tool employed in dressing them would be profaning our labour, thus emphatically interdicting any symbolic ornament or configuration upon the material of the altar, whether these figures were alto- or basso-relievos, whether for worship, symbolism, or commemoration; no, the blocks were to be piled one on the other, with nothing but cement to hold them together, and nothing but that simple material wherewith to cover the outside and to render smooth the rough surface. Thus simply was our altar to be constituted; so rude, if you will, divested of all art and its concomitant labour and evil consequences, were to be the places especially dedicated to the Lord of heaven and earth. For what need was there to represent Him or his attributes by outward symbols, signs, or tokens? can we reach even an approximation of what He is by any sign, figure or grouping which our art can invent? Look, I pray you, upon the most sublime conceptions of the most endowed painters in which they have

daringly attempted to convey their conceptions of the attributes of the Divinity: and you must acknowledge their weakness, their folly, their wickedness and absurdity, without any appeal from any one or reference even to the law. The thing speaks for itself. So then, the very materials for our altar were to be the reverse of art or ornament, not that art or ornament is in itself sinful, but because it was best to worship the Most High in the simplicity of nature, in all the grandeur of humility; for before Him who is exalted and the supreme over all, the greatest decoration sinks into utter insignificance and meaningless show.

Still was the whole system of worship not exhausted by the permission of universal prayer and the erection of a simple altar. God disdains not the homage of his creatures, although all we have comes from his hand, and we only give unto Him from what He has bestowed on us. Nay more, He vouchsafed to tell unto Moses,

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם : שמות כה' ח' :

"And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them." Exodus xxv. 8.

He whom the heavens cannot contain, in whom the universe exists, promises to dwell in a sanctuary the work of the hands of man. We must understand this verse well; it is not said by this that God's essence should be confined to the space within the four walls thus to be erected; but that through this structure, so established, there should be present a greater and closer manifestation of his power than can be at-

tained in any other spot on the earth, and the sanctuary would thus become not alone metaphorically, but literally, the residence of the glory of the Most High, whilst at the same time his providence and mercy would be, as they would be without the existence of the tabernacle, pervading all space at all times and seasons. But there is a peculiarity observable in the command for the erection of the sanctuary, and it is found in the words immediately succeeding those just quoted, "All just as I am showing thee, the model of the tabernacle, and the model of all its vessels, thus only shall ye make it." When it was thus told us that we were permitted to imitate other nations in the erection of a structure for worship, and when thus certified that it was become our duty to devote a portion of our possessions in this manner to the service of the Lord: it was at the same time made manifest that, like all other duties, it was to be lawful only within specified limitations, and that to do more or less would render it unacceptable to the Deity. A miraculous image of the tabernacle was exhibited to Moses, whilst he was in communion with the God of Israel during forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai; the shape of every vessel, of the altars, the ark, the candelabrum, the table, the laver, and in brief every part in the most minute details, was exhibited to him, and he was told, "Thus shall ye make it;" and hence when Moses was afterwards satisfied "that all had been made as the Lord had commanded him," he blessed the workmen who had been filled with divine knowledge to fulfil their task; because they had strictly conformed to the duty assigned to them, and had not added to nor diminished from the exact

line of duty which had been pointed out to them in this respect. This now must teach us the important lesson: that it is not the elegance of the structure which we erect for worship which renders it acceptable to our Master, but it is our acting in consonance with his will, and from a motive on which He in his knowledge of our heart can bestow his approbation. It is not the fretted roof, nor the burnished gold, nor the carpeted floor, nor the beauty of the design which can sanctify the outward house of God, when the inward man is corrupt, and he prides himself in his liberality so ostentatiously displayed, and seeks for new ways to worship God, which are not embraced in the law. Nor does it materially enhance the value of the temple whether it be large and elegantly decorated, so it only be in accordance with the prescribed forms of religion and commensurate with the means of its builders. The essence of the sanctuary is *obedience;* with it a small building of rude boards, or even a temporary tent in the wilderness, is a receptacle for the glory; without it the temples of Solomon and of Herod became odious in the sight of the Almighty Judge, and He had them swept off the earth by the fire of the enemies of Israel.

Yes, worship, natural as it is to man, should not be performed from this motive solely; but only because it is permitted to us by our Father, to honour Him with the words of our lips, and to ask his aid in the time of our need. We should erect synagogues where we can meet for the common worship of our common Father, undistracted by domestic cares, and uninterrupted by our daily avocations. But they should be built in the fear of God, and their foundation be laid

in the inward adoration which our hearts owe to Him, because He is great, because He is good and holy. It is farther our duty not to resort to foreign instruction to direct us how to worship; but we should "ask our fathers and they are to tell us, and our elders who shall declare it unto us;" we cannot search in the annals of error for our guide to the presence of the Most High, but only in the Scriptures which we have received, and there we shall learn that to Him the high and low are alike; that He respects no persons; that He asks for no mediator; that He alone is our God and our Saviour, and that hence all Israel, no matter who and where they are, should, as they are permitted by his providence, enter the places sacred to his Name, and there in unison with their fellows of Jacob's seed pray in direct terms for mercy and favour, and obtain instruction in the words of salvation, rendered common property by the gift of God to all the descendants of Israel. It is not worldly greatness which constitutes Israel's glory; for what people is lowlier, less regarded, less loved, than the wandering tribes of Jacob? But our excellence consists in the possession of our religion, and this then is the true ornament of the synagogue, and its promotion is the chief aim of public worship. You can pray devoutly and acceptably at home; your Father in heaven stands by in his glory to receive the homage of sincere lips which is offered to Him on all the earth; nevertheless it is the assembly of the faithful, in the houses wherein his Name is called, that we are animated by each other's example, and urged forward by our common bond of brotherhood. If one is weak in faith, if worldly seductions and interested views

withhold him from the path of duty, he will here be moved by the words and acts of others to reflect on the greatness of God, and how He is good and beneficent, and mighty to reward, to pause on an intended course of sin, and to seek the sure refuge of the divine grace in obedience to the law. Here can meet those in whose bosom rankles mutual hatred, and here can they learn to forgive each other's wrongs, seeing that both come hither to ask the protection of the same Source of all good. The ceremonies of Israel may then be ever so unsightly to those who know them not: what need this trouble us; seeing that we persevere in the course of our forefathers, and pay the same tribute of obedience in worshipping according to the letter and spirit of the Law, the same God of ancient days, in whom youth is no token of vigour and length of days no sign of decrepitude? Be then our meeting-places large or small, elegant or simple, according to the circumstances of the community, it matters not; the same form is observed, the same religion is taught, and the same God is nigh to hear and to save. Only let the sanctuary be sanctified by the spirit which hallowed the temple in its palmy days, and there will be the presence of the Lord experienced, even here and at this time, so far from Palestine, so remote from the land of our birth. But if we follow in the errors of the gentiles, if outward beauty is to be exhibited whilst the inward sanctification is wanting: better far would it be that we meet in the recesses of the forest or under the shadow of some overhanging cliff, if only there be holiness in the hearts of all, and mutual good-will and friendship among the worshippers. The tabernacle was built

after the design of divine wisdom, and when Solomon erected the structure, which took seven years in building, it was merely on an enlarged scale to that which travelled with the tribes in the wilderness. Both were highly beautiful, each was the highest effort of art; yet was there no meretricious ornament, but simplicity, grandeur, and *faith*. Let it be then the same with us, let our worship continue simple as it always was; but let us purify our hearts, wash in innocence our hands, that we may enter the portals of the Lord as humble attendants in his holy house: and then will union and faith adorn and crown our life, and we shall be accepted as servants who have truly loved their God, and be blessed with eternal light. Amen.

Adar 7th. } 5608.
Feb. 11th. }

DISCOURSE XXI.

STRICT OBEDIENCE.

No. I.

Sovereign of the universe! we are thine; Thou hast formed the body in which dwells our soul, and Thou hast breathed the spirit of life into our nostrils, that the work of thy hands might understand that Thou art the Creator, the God whose are the world and all that fills it. O, teach us how to love Thee! instruct us how to fear Thee! that we may guard the body against its being made the instrument of trans-

gression, and preserve the soul against its being polluted by sin: in order that our flesh may repose in peace in the grave after the spirit has fled, to become again instinct with everlasting life at the resurrection of the dead, when Thou wilt open the graves of thy people and bring them forth to the light of a new existence; and in order that the soul may dwell with Thee in the abode and brightness of the saints and the pure ones, those in whom Thou delightest, those who have been thy messengers on earth, and have fulfilled the trust Thou hast imposed on them, and obeyed thy will which Thou hast revealed to them in thy law.—O, that this may be thy gracious pleasure, and that Thou wilt bless us as Thou hast blessed our fathers! Amen.

Brethren!

In the lesson from the Pentateuch which we read this day are the following words:

ככל אשר צוה ה׳ את משה כן עשו בני ישראל
את כל העבדה : ויראׂ משה את כל המלאכה והנה
עשו אתה כאשר צוה ה׳ כן עשו ויברך אתם משה :
שמות לט׳ מב׳ מג׳ :

"All as the Lord had commanded Moses, so made the children of Israel all the service. And when Moses saw all the work, and beheld they had made it, as the Lord had commanded, so had they done, then Moses blessed them." Exodus, xxxix. 42, 43.

These verses are a part, and this the concluding portion of the history of the erection of the tabernacle which our fathers made in the desert, together with all the appurtenances and the priestly garments,

and the matters belonging to the service connected therewith; and they then say, that precisely as Moses had been instructed, so did the artists accomplish the task assigned to them, and though excelling in inventive power, and endowed with skill to carry out their ideas, they did not depart from the instruction and charge given to them, simply obeying what they had been taught as their duty; and when the great teacher found this to be the case, he bestowed his benediction, and thereby expressed the satisfaction of the Divine Mind, whose mouthpiece he was, on those who had accomplished the work of preparing the habitation for the Name of the Lord. This is the simple exposition of our text, and its words mean nothing else in their evident tendency. But they teach us a lesson, which is also applicable to the present day, and will be so likewise to the end of all our generations; and it is accordingly not without a wise purpose, that in last week's and to-day's sections the very words almost of *Therumah* and *Thetzavveh* are repeated; as this is evidently done to show the exact correspondence between the command and the obedience.

Here my sermon on the text I have chosen might well and fittingly end, although I have but just commenced. It requires no skill to apply the lesson to our life, to the practical workings of an every-day existence. But even familiar subjects gain by discussion, and self-evident truths become stronger impressed on the mind when they are illustrated more completely to our satisfaction; and so let us travel together a brief space, to study the nature of the Jewish religion, as illustrated by the text.

If you seriously listen to the arguments of gentiles, and to the assertion of many Jews, even of some who profess to be religious, you would be almost disgusted with your religion, upon the allegation that we are without spirit, without any high appreciation of pure faith, and only bound to the dead letter of form and ceremony; and then it is asserted by a parity of reasoning that the spirit is every thing, and the letter and the observance of its plain meaning a matter of no vital importance, but on the contrary, a sort of hindrance to the acquisition of holiness obtainable in some way by a course of thought and action not based on the words, but the spirit of religion. There is a great confusion of terms and ideas in all this; but it is just as I have ever been able to comprehend it. A professed great value is thus attached to mere feelings, things in themselves not cognizable by the outward eye, and which, therefore, a man may allege to possess, without being in reality imbued with them in the remotest degree. Mere words cost nothing; and in truth, very often one is exceedingly eloquent and loud concerning that of which he knows the least, and which really affects him to a very small extent; and instances are not wanting where men persecuted others for not entertaining speculative dogmas, of which they themselves had neither knowledge nor actual conviction. If now religion is required to reside in the spirit only, and if no acts are needed to demonstrate its existence, there would be at once a great absurdity involved; for what value would religion have, if it is not to regulate the conduct? The very savage would be superior, in his natural impulsive action, to the refined

thinker who regulates the inward man exclusively, without bestowing any care on externals. It is thus evident, that it is not intended to define religion to consist *merely* in thoughts; since evidently the veriest spiritualist demands some sort of action in correspondence with his principles; and though there are not wanting examples of those who taught that to the saints, as they are arrogantly called, everything is permitted, and those who inculcate that wrong may be done that good may come out of it: it is a fortunate thing that such monstrous doctrines have received the abhorrence of mankind. Society is based upon something stronger than speculation; the security of the public demands conformance to certain fixed laws; and hence no one will be permitted to offend against them by the profession, that he is governed by the spirit which dictated the statutes of the commonwealth, whilst he thinks that the letter which prohibits and enjoins certain things, was not meant for one of so sublime a soul as he is, though perfectly applicable to the less enlightened.

The only real distinction, then, between professors of religion, the true servants of God and friends of humanity, can be the number of the acts which are deemed requisite; and if this is once admitted as the true standard, then it is a simple matter of difference of quantity, not as regards the necessity of acts; and hence, if one deems a single act of religion or morality requisite in obedience to his religion, he is as little spiritual as regards this one, as though he deemed as requisite to his salvation and practised a thousand acts.—Do not then be terrified by the word *formalist*, which has occasionally been applied to Jews who

think themselves bound to lay *Tefillin;* to wear a *Tallith;* to fix a *Mezuzah* to the door-posts of their houses and their gates; to address their Maker in words of prayer three times every day; to abstain from certain food; to fast on the appointed days; to rest on the Sabbath, and so on with other commandments. If this be the only fault which can be found with you, you need not blush for your course of life, nor for your religion, nor for your people who act on the same principles. For you are then acting in obedience to the essence of religion, and prove that the teaching of your God has not been lost upon you. But then other men do not wear Tefillin? other religious persons do not put on the Tallith when they worship in the house of God? other persuasions do not affix the Mezuzah to the entrance of their houses? True, most true; but then you are Israelites; you have received instruction as to what the Lord asks of you; and since you believe that both the letter and the spirit of the faith you have are derived from Him, that is to say, that you are taught how to believe and how to act in obedience to the commands of your Maker, you can have no excuse, no pretence whatever for relying on the practices or professions of others for your course of conduct. You are not to go around among heathens or unbelievers in revelation, nor among Mahomedans and Nazarenes, nor among Catholics and Protestants, nor among Universalists and Unitarians, nor among philosophers and atheists, to ask them "What is your opinion of this or the other Mosaic precept? have you reflected on it? do you deem it reasonable? have you adopted it in your system? will you adopt it when we have con-

vinced you?" No, brethren! it is no concern of yours; you have no religious connexion with any one man, nor all mankind together; if the one or the whole act according to the instruction you have received, then it is so much the better, so much more conducive to their individual and eternal happiness; but if the one or the whole differ from you, how does this affect your obligation? your sense of duty? your superior religious education? Yes, education is the word; you were redeemed from Egypt, not merely that you might be no longer slaves to the sons of Mitzrayim, though this was also an object of the Deity, but that the Lord might be your God; as we read in Leviticus xxv. 55: "For unto me are the sons of Israel servants; my servants they are, whom I have brought out from the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God." And again, xxvi. 45: "And I will remember unto them the covenant with the ancients, whom I have brought forth from the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations, to be unto them a God; I am the Lord." So then we must maintain, without enlarging particularly on this subject at the present moment, that our dwelling in Egypt and our liberation from it were intended as our education for the divine service.

The Lord desired to raise up a family of men to whom his name and his worship were to be a perpetual heirloom; and He therefore tried them in the furnace of affliction, and impressed on their mind the never-to-be-forgotten conviction of his greatness, goodness, and power; and gave them those laws and ordinances which He deemed requisite to their happiness. Have other nations the same history? the

same consequent obligation as collective bodies for divine favours? have they the same destiny? Evidently not; the very chronicles of the world contradict such an assumption; and hence their conduct cannot of right become a source of inquiry to us, that we might act according to their example. The very reverse is the case. Long after we were basking in the brilliant sunshine of the holy revelation of our eternal Father, all the people walked each in the name of his god, the invention of the conceits of men; and when in the process of time healing came to them through our wounds, when our sorrows and bruises redounded to their advantage: it was not a new light which was kindled for them; it was not a new display of the glorious Majesty, which of old blazed before our enraptured eyes, which descended unto them; but they accepted a portion of our law for their guidance, adopting for their standard the mere scintillations of the faith which the Holiest had imparted to us. And are we to reduce our religious duties, because they have not adopted the whole of them? are we to follow them in rejecting what they refuse as useless, simply because they follow the teaching of men whom God has not sent? who ran to announce messages, when He did not command them? Is this acting up to the ancient love of Israel for God at the time of our espousal, when we became united to the Lord of the universe by the ties of love, of protection on his part, and obedience on ours? When was the dispensation granted? inform us, that we may know; not indeed in dark riddles and double-meaning phrases, but in direct terms, so that we may understand our new relation to our God, our Father,

our Lord and our Spouse? Where, if it be as you say, was the spot whence this new light emanated to the world, that we may hie thither and worship in a place so signally favoured by the divine glory? But we demand answers in vain; we call for light, but there is no one to show it to us; we are referred to dreams of pretended prophets, to the preaching of an alleged redeemer; and withal, it is pretended that the law is not abolished, that not an iota nor a tittle thereof shall pass away whilst heaven and earth endure. Even so mote it be; every Israelite, who is true to his God, will join in this idea with an emphatic "Amen; yes, heaven and earth may vanish, as the grass withers and as the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

If then you are justly accusable of a want of spirituality, it cannot be owing to your adhering to your religious duties, but to your not observing the precepts from a correct appreciation of their origin and their object; or if you are careful of external acts of worship, and neglect the duties of personal holiness and those relating to the intercourse between man and man, or those due from the individual to society. To be imbued with the spirit of religion truly, means nothing else than that a man feels the sacred obligation of the whole law in every relation of life, when he is in youth or age, in public or alone, rich or poor, exalted or humble; in every instance there must be no break in the connecting bond which unites him to God, there must be no link wanting in the chain which binds him to the creatures whom his Father has placed around him. If we observe the Sabbath, which is our holiest testimony to the existence of God,

and that He is the Creator: we should at the same time be careful not to offend by violating the property of our neighbours, nor to injure them in feeling, in honour, or reputation. If we abstain from those things which our religion justly calls unclean: there must not adhere to our hands the plunder of the widow, or the hard-earned wages of the helpless orphan.—If we are devout at the house of God, and say with holy unction the prayers which are prescribed to us by the ancient teachers of Israel: we should not desecrate our lips on our return home by slandering the absent, or making the helpless ashamed by the bitter taunting words which drop from our mouth, words oftener more bitter than the stab of the assassin's dagger, for that kills outright the perishable body; but unkind and wrongly inflicted brutal censure rankles for a long life-time in the soul of the afflicted, and they carry often the degradation with them to the grave; and so also teach the sages of Israel: "He who makes his neighbour's face blanch in public will have no share in the future world, although he be possessed of a knowledge of the law and have committed many good deeds." Spirituality then means that our mind, the spirit, is thoroughly impressed with our relative position to God; and if this be the case in sincerity and truth, there can be no divergence between outward acts of religion and those of morality; between the man before the gaze of millions and him in the recesses of his chamber, with no eye to see him but that of his God's providence. Ay, you find but few such; this is readily admitted; but this is not the fault of outward acts of faith, but is ascribable to the imperfection of human

nature, and that no man is so upright on earth that he sin not. This, however, is no excuse for transgression; but is only given as an illustration of a well-known fact, the cause for which is not to be found in the existence of religion, but in the lamentable circumstances, that very few, if any, men yield themselves entirely to the dictates of their God. Let the religion be ever so beautiful, the duties prescribed by it ever so beneficial, ever so few: there will be always transgressions against the plainest dictates of reason, against the most self-evident advantages resulting from the acts demanded. If this is a cause of censure to the outwardness of the Jewish ceremonial observances; it is equally so, and in fact to a far greater degree, against those who claim a superior illumination of the soul by a light, which they allege to be granted to those who have become the elect. Sinning in the simple meaning of the word is not destroyed by any system of faith or rule of practice; but both were given to correct us, the one, the errors to which the human mind is liable when uninstructed, the other, to point out the acts which are to be done to produce the greatest amount of happiness compatible with the state of individuals and society. The very existence of duty proves that something was necessary to overcome the evil which untaught human passions would have produced in the world; and the frequent neglect thereof only establishes the superior excellence of those who abide by it in the greatest degree.

Some will allege that they are good, notwithstanding that they violate the ceremonial observances; they love their neighbour so much, they are such good

citizens, they are so charitable, that they fancy everything can be atoned for by their good civil deeds. They point to the rogueries of some outwardly pious persons, to the ill temper of others, to the bigotry and want of charity both in feeling and money of another party; and then they ask exultingly whether they are not far better, though they eat forbidden food and labour on the Sabbath? It is surely a mark of a diseased mind, to compare seriously one set of sins with another, and then demand which is the best defect! A defect, a gross sin either of the above lines of conduct is to a certainty, and each is fatal to the life of the soul: where then is the superior merit in either? where the cause of congratulation which some utter, "Thank God! that I am not so bad as my neighbour?" If one man expires under the influence of a violent fever and another from a slow consumption, is there any perceptible benefit to the individual sufferer that he has escaped the disease which slays his friend? And yet upon such frivolous pretences do people stigmatize the strict Jew for his adherence to minute forms, what they call trifles, but which the Scriptures demand as a part of our duties. The holy Record establishes no difference between the qualities and degrees of sin, farther than fixing the penalty for many social crimes and a few against the religious ones proper. But beyond this there is no line of distinction drawn, which points out that the observance of the Sabbath is of less importance than the law which prohibits stealing, and so with other precepts. Doubtless society is more injured, immediately, so far as we can judge, by a man's robbing his neighbour; and hence the whole community is alive to punish

him who violates other's rights and property. But no one can tell us, with any show of reason, that to the sinner himself the violation of a purely religious obligation may not be more injurious than that of a mere moral kind. Temptation, poverty, or a mistaken view of personal rights, may induce a criminal violation of property; the very punishment so readily meted out is often more than a fair retaliation for the wrong inflicted; but to neglect a religious duty is often the result of a previously-studied disregard of what has been taught from infancy, and is tantamount to a removal of the fear of God from our heart. But I will not fall into the error I condemn in others, of defining which is the worst sin; our only guide herein is the word of God, and whatever that enjoins is duty and should be observed, and whatever it prohibits is sin and should be carefully avoided.

Now let me revert to our text. The tabernacle which our fathers built in the wilderness, equally with the temple which afterwards was erected in Jerusalem, was an actual outward thing, not a mere spirituality, or a type of something which was to occur thereafter. Men of a dreamy disposition, who can fancy nothing real in the most palpable reality, have indeed endeavoured to show that the tabernacle was not to be for itself, but to foreshadow things to happen in future generations; they insist, in accordance with their plan, that mere observance is nothing in comparison with ideal religion, they remove the reality from the erection of a house of God, and entwine with it a species of mystery (I hardly know what word to use) which the letter of the commandment does nowise indicate. But to us, Israelites, the erec-

tion of the tabernacle was a positive duty; each man was desired to give what he pleased; and they in whose heart God had placed wisdom and knowledge were to perfect, after the ordained form, the rough materials which the faithful brought in abundance to the treasury of the sanctuary. "But what was then the meritoriousness in all this?" ask our opponents, "if you do not look for anything holier or better in the tabernacle than its boards, its hangings, its vessels, and its internal arrangements; if you see nothing more in the order of priesthood than merely a set of men devoted to perform the sacrifices and attend to the other duties imposed on them; when you behold in the sacrifices merely the blood and the flesh of brute victims which were slaughtered in expiation of the sins of the sacrificers?" But there is one thing, after all, which is forgotten in all these questions, and that is, that we did not originate the manner of erecting the tabernacle; we did not ourselves establish the priesthood in Aaron and his sons; we did not invent the order of sacrifices, nor did we teach that the blood of them atoned for the soul; but all sprung from the will of God, who so desired a habitation for his glory; so sanctified Aaron and his sons from the midst of the children of Israel; so ordered his altar to be fed with the flesh of burnt-offerings and the fat of sacrifices for trespass and sin, and thanksgiving and voluntary sacrifices. There was, therefore, but one spirit presiding over the whole arrangement, as over the Sabbath, parental love, filial obedience, and other duties—it was, in a word, obedience—a readiness to do, because God had commanded. It was therefore not the elegance of the work which the Israelites had

completed, but the exactitude with which they had followed the directions which the prophet had received from the mouth of Supreme Glory which demanded and obtained his blessing, as we are told: "All as the Lord had commanded Moses, so had made the Israelites all the service." I have preferred rendering the word עבדה otherwise used to designate the outward worship, literally with "service," and we may be sure that it was not employed without design. Thus the מלאכה work, performed by Bezalel and Aholiab, and others, was at the same time a service unto the Most High, because, gifted as they had been with all knowledge, they had not added of their own invention to the prescribed form, number, and dimensions of the things they made; but they had truly served their God by fulfilling his commands to the fullest extent of the instruction which they had received. It was, however, not a blind, unreasoning obedience, but an act of faith; an obedience because the Supreme Wisdom had thought it best that so He would be honoured by the work of the hands of his creatures. Therefore, when Moses saw this, how the highest perfection of human intellect had been exerted to worship the Most High in simple obedience, he blessed the faithful servants who had so well accomplished their whole task. The work was outwardly done, but the spirit was sanctified; and therefore only could the glory of the Lord dwell in the fabric thus made, thus finished, in exact conformity with his revealed will. If it had been a thousand times larger, a thousand times more beautiful, it would not have obtained the Lord's approbation; because He, in whom the world exists, requires no habi-

tation which we can erect for his dwelling. But when the soul is subdued, penetrated with the sacredness of his being, and conscious that to Him all obedience is due: then will He come, unending as is his majesty, and be evident in our midst, and his blessing will make even for us the rugged path of life, and our eye will behold the wonders of his law, and as we grow older we shall become wiser, and the nearer we approach the brink of the grave the riper shall we be for heaven.

You need not then be ashamed, O sons and daughters of Israel! that such is the religion which you profess, which points out to you the path you should travel while on earth, and which opens for you the portals of heaven when you depart hence according to the inevitable decree of your Father and God. Only live in his fear, only walk in his way, and you may travel on securely amidst the dangers which beset your path; and when on earth, your steps will be guarded that you stumble not; and when your days are ended, you will rest securely in your graves until the last awakening from the sleep of death, and your souls will be bound up in the bond of life before the Lord your God. Amen.

Veadar 5th. } 5608.
March 10th. }

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN.

O LORD our God, almighty and merciful Father! how long wilt thou delay having mercy on Jerusalem, and the outcasts of thy people? Behold! our city is desolate, and but a ruin remains of thy sanctuary; and thy children are scattered over the face of the earth, without a government, without a shepherd, and many of them are lost among the gentiles through the length of the captivity, and are drawn unto sin because they listen to the overtures of their adversaries, and worship the strange gods which others worship, as though the hope of Israel were lost and extinguished in the whirlpool of eternity. Whereas Thou, O living God! art the sole Hope of our race, the God whom alone we will adore; the true Shepherd, who wilt lead us securely on rich pastures; the Saviour of Jacob, who wilt in mercy send the Redeemer to us to reinstate us in our inheritance, to restore thy law to its ancient power over the heart and affairs of man, to banish all false belief, all vanity from the earth, when all who have spirit will truly see thy glory, and call alone on Thee, and worship none beside Thee, on that brilliant day when justice and righteousness will rule the earth, and nation will not lift up sword against nation, and mankind no more learn war. And then will our temple again be the dwelling of thy Name, and offerings will be ac-

ceptable to Thee as of old, when Thou wilt abide in the midst of us, to bless us and all the world with thy peace. Amen.

Brethren!

In the Haphtorah of to-day, taken from the fourth and fifth chapters of the second book of Kings, is told the history of the leper Naaman, the chief officer of the ruler of Syria, who, on being informed that the Israelitish prophet had power not granted to any other man, was prevailed upon to visit Samaria, with the permission of his master, to obtain from the man of God that relief from his incurable disease, which he had hoped for in vain from the remedies of the physicians of his own country and belief. Behold him full of doubts and misgivings on his adventurous journey; a Jewish captive maiden had indeed assured his wife that he should of a certainty be cured by the prophet of Samaria; but it might be the boasting of a captive, who reverted back with regret to her native land, where she had sported in innocent mirth among maidens as gleesome as herself, and whose romantic soul covered everything in her lost home with the mantle of marvellousness, and the interest of a peculiar holiness not appertaining to other lands. It was merely the desperation of hopelessness, perhaps, which induced the valiant soldier to listen to so wonderful a tale; his own priests, the worshippers of his own gods, had no such power, they claimed not to restore a man from leprosy: and why should such a power be inherent in the men of that people over which he had so often triumphed? And still he had heard of the mighty God of Israel, of the many great

deeds which He had wrought in Egypt and Palestine for his people; and how He was supposed by them to be superior to all gods, and all-sufficient to do of himself whatever might be pleasing to his will. But again he may have thought, If this God be so great, why does He not extend his kingdom over all the earth, which the Israelites allege is the work of his creation? why does He allow other gods to be worshipped when He is God alone? Again he may have supposed that, granted even that God had power, would He heal one like himself who worshipped Him not? who paid his adoration to what must be false, in case the idea of the Hebrews with regard to the Deity were true? And observe farther in our narrative, the general had gone and told the king of Syria of the marvellous story of the maiden; and as potentates of the earth always think their power paramount to all else, he at once conceived the idea that, if Naaman could be cured in Samaria, it must be through means of the king of Israel, who if even not able to devise the required remedy himself, would to a certainty have the influence with the humble prophet, who had no armed legions to do his will, nor courtiers to flatter his vanity, to do all he desired. But for once the worshipper of the calves of Jeroboäm felt that he had no ability to do the bidding of the Syrian monarch. "Am I a god," said he, "to slay and to make alive, that he hath sent unto me to cure a man of his leprosy?" and straightways he imagined that it was a device of the Syrian to seek a mere pretext for renewing the ancient hostilities between Aram and Israel. Yes, the idolatrous king of Samaria rent his garments, so agitated was he at the

unexpected message, so horrified was he at the presence of the leper who asked to be restored to health. But what earthly kings cannot achieve, what neither wealth nor station can accomplish, is nevertheless within divine possibility. Nor had the Jewish maiden, who first had spoken of the miraculous gifts of Elisha, in common with others acquainted with the ways of God with man, for a moment thought the power inherent in, or attainable by the ruler, but in the man on whom had fallen a twofold share of the spirit of him who ascended to the abodes of the blessed without passing through the gates of death; and as said, it was only the natural error of the idolater of Damascus, who, because he was all-potent with his priests and soothsayers, imagined the same to be the case with all other religions, so that over its followers everywhere the chief of the state had ample control to mould them to his will, to coerce them to do his bidding. But it need not be told you how utterly inapplicable all this is to our faith, which has its source from God, and knows of no authority on earth to which it must render homage, which views all alike who have received life and intellect from the Creator; since even the priests and prophets are not established for their own especial benefit, but that they might render to the people the services which their God conceives will be for the great benefit of all; so that all, whether people or their religious, nay their civil leaders, are included in the one great idea of all being banded together to worship the Most High, and promote each other's greatest happiness. When Elisha therefore had heard that King Joram had rent his garments, he demanded that the Syrian should be

sent to him, that he might experience that there was a prophet in Israel, not like the soothsayers of the heathens, who deceived the people by false and pretended revelations, but a true messenger, who had received from the Lord the mission to prove the great power of our God, how that He is supreme and alone exalted above all.

Now the Syrian, though suffering from a loathsome disease, had not thereby diminished in the least of the pride of his position as leader of the royal army, and he went with his chariots and horses and stood at the door of Elisha's house, expecting that the prophet would come out to him, lay his hand on the diseased part, call on the name of the Lord, and thus not alone restore him to health, but exhibit to him at once the connexion between the power of God, and the prayer and influence of Elisha. This procedure would have shown Naaman to be a man whose well-being was of importance to the divine economy, and the evident miraculousness of the cure, the solemnity of the prophet's prayer, in the presence of the chiefs and nobles of Damascus and Samaria, would have been well-pleasing to the haughty military commander who came to expect relief, not to look for it in humility. It was therefore with deep chagrin that he received a message merely from Elisha, who himself did not deign even to look upon his military visitor, the noise of whose followers, and the tramplings of whose steeds resounded in the street in front of his dwelling. And what was the message? was any great demand made? any deep medical skill displayed? any immediate miracle to be performed? any public prayer to be offered up? Nothing of all this was done;

but Naaman was ordered to go farther to the east, till he reached the banks of the sacred Jordan, and in its waters he was to bathe seven times, neither more or less, when his flesh should again assume a healthy complexion, and he should be cleansed from the contagion. You can easily picture to yourselves the wrath of the proud soldier, at finding his dignity so thoroughly slighted by the holy man of Samaria. So there was to be no prayer even offered up in his behalf; and who could tell why he bid him to go on that errand? was it perhaps to gain time? was it a mere device because he had no power to act in the case? and why not order him to the beautiful rivers of Damascus, to the lovely Amanah, and the clear Pharpar? were they not far superior to the unpretending rivers of Palestine? what virtue could there be in Jordan which his own streams did not possess? But he forgot all the time, that neither he nor any other man had a right to demand that an unusual cure should be wrought in his behalf; that nothing he had done could entitle him to be exhibited before the world as one for whose restoration signs and wonders should be performed, and that at length, if he would do something to deserve the divine mercy, the first they would have to be his submitting himself entirely and unconditionally to the demands of God, as exhibited to him by his prophet. It was not then that Elisha had not power to cure by prayer; but it was withheld in order to afford Naaman some slight opportunity to render himself worthy of the blessing which he solicited; he had not yet learned the worship of the Lord, and he became thus familiarized with the sublime truth, THAT IT IS OBEDIENCE

WHICH IS DEMANDED, IF WE WISH TO BE PLEASING TO GOD, and that as its reward only can mercy be shown to us. Moreover, though bathing seven times in the Jordan made the wonderfulness of the cure no less evident than any other inadequate means to produce a given cause, still was it employing some natural method, some aid from man himself, through which means the divine blessing could be conferred; and again Naaman was thus taught another important lesson, that man must do something of his own, that he must be active in some shape or other, in order to obtain that assistance from above, without which all labour is in vain, and without which nothing can avail. After Naaman had therefore turned away in anger, his servants persuaded him not to throw away lightly the promise of divine mercy which the prophet had opened to him. Yes a great thing, the slaying of a thousand steers, the giving away of treasures to any amount, wading through blood of conquered armies, would have appeared insignificant in his sight, if he could only thereby regain his strength; and therefore the smallness of the trial displeased him even more than the prophet's own apparent indifference to his suffering. They entreated him then to submit to this little condition; and when thus subdued, lo! he went into the water which he had esteemed so lightly, and barely had the seventh ablution taken place, than his flesh was again like the flesh of a little boy, and he was clean, and the marks of the contagion which had made him shunned, despite of his greatness, were at once removed, in accordance with the conditionary promise of the man of God.

Let it be observed that had any priests of falsehood

obtained such a triumph over the disease which had affected so important a personage in the state, it would have been performed under imposing circumstances, with all possible contrivances to lend importance and high sanction to the occasion. Presents too, rich and costly, would have been demanded, not alone received; and the individual actors would have glorified themselves at their unexpected success, for however artfully contrived, there could never be any certainty in any jugglery or trick thus attempted to be consummated. The very absence, however, of Elisha in the present instance, the simplicity of the remedy, the confident tone of the promise, the entire success of the obedience of Naaman, convinced not only the object of the cure but the unbelieving Syrians, as well as the sinning Israelites, that the power of the Lord is indeed the irresistible influence which governs the world, and that hence, unless there be another deity of equal ability to work his will with himself, He must be the sole controller of the whole world. But as all the nations of that day worshipped a multitude of divinities, all of which partook of the nature of finite beings, and were even, according to their priests, under the influence of uncontrollable chance, and since from this consideration they could not predict, nor cause others to predict with certainty what was to occur; and whereas Elisha had clearly pointed out an unusual means to effect a given purpose, and predicted to a certainty all the occurrences as they took place, and this all based upon the will of God: Naaman came justly to the conclusion that, as the God of Elisha had thus proved his ability to effect his purpose, and had so clearly defined how it was to

be accomplished, it proved that He must be uncontrolled by any other power, and is in fact the sole God in all the earth. And so say the Scriptures, 2 Kings v. 15:

וישב אל איש האלהים הוא וכל מחנהו ויבא ויעמד לפניו ויאמר הנה נא ידעתי כי אין אלהים בכל הארץ כי אם בישראל : מלכים ב׳ ה׳ טו׳ :

"And he returned unto the man of God, he with all his camp, and he came and stood before him, and said, Behold, now I know indeed that there is no God on all the earth but in Israel."

What first he had heard in anger and derision had now proved to him that with God all is possible, and that although he had done nothing to deserve the mercy shown unto him, it was now made evident unto him, that when God desires to bless, no one can stay Him, and no circumstance, however slight, will be ineffectual to effect his almighty purposes, the moment it is his intention to bless or to punish; and he left Samaria with different feelings from those with which he had entered it, and he resolved henceforward to be a follower of the true God, and when making sacrifices, to do so only unto Him, whose are the majesty, and the glory, and the dominion of all the world.

Perhaps it may be asked why so much undeserved kindness was shown to Naaman, especially as nothing farther is said of him in the subsequent passages of the Bible? But without going very deeply into the subject, it would be enough to answer in general terms, that we must apply here also, as on other occasions, the words which the Lord himself taught unto

Moses when asking for a knowledge of the ways of God: "And I will be gracious unto him to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on him to whom I will show mercy." It is, in other words, the province of our Father alone to determine who is to be blessed, and also to cause it to have a permanent influence on the affairs of the world at large. We may not, indeed, have any knowledge or conception even how any one occurrence, for instance this one of Naaman, may or can affect mankind in general; but for all that there may have been a great necessity in the fearful demoralization of that age, as it was in the preceding one, through Elijah's miracles, to teach the Israelites,—as the depositaries of the law,—the great truths which Moses had first handed down to the assembled people. Fearful inroads had the various systems of idolatry made upon the simple religion of the Bible; the Israelites had adopted the vagaries of the heathen mythologies, and the observance of the commandments fell daily more in abeyance. It mattered not then so much who the instruments that were made the cause of arresting the total extinction of religion were, as that such were raised up for the wisest of purposes, by the most benevolent of all beings; and that they were so various, from the poor man who had to borrow an axe to chop down a tree, to the general of Benhadad's army—from the simple female of Shunem, to the valiant king of Israel, only confirmed the more thoroughly the many who yet adhered to the truth, that they would not be forsaken themselves, and that the God whom they adored and the religion which they followed would forever remain the inheritance of their people, and

that nothing done by them within, and nothing done by others from without, would ever obliterate the belief in the sole Creator from the hearts of their latest descendants, or let the law perish from out of their mouth. Whatever God has created is for his glory; and hence those whom He deems so are the most fitting to carry out his benevolent views. If, then, to our apprehension even they are not the most suitable, we ought to be very cautious how we allow ourselves to sin by impugning the wisdom of which we cannot understand the very beginning; and that the actors in these great events appear but once on the scene, is not to assert that they were useless. The example needed was one of a peculiar kind, we may assume; and it having been given, its repetition was not necessary, and the actors also required not to be dwelt upon in the future development of the history of the world. The Bible, let it be remembered, was not written for our amusement, or to satisfy our curiosity, but to instruct us in the way of life; and the healing of Naaman is accordingly complete in itself, and teaches the lessons which we have already touched upon, and which we will now recapitulate in a connected form. *First*, whatever afflicts us is a divine dispensation: Naaman's disease was evidently within the divine cognizance, and consequently we must not imagine that we are neglected or forsaken of God, if the pleasant current of our days is interrupted, and sickness and its pains invade our domicil. *Secondly*, that all our cures are in the hands of Him who afflicts us; consequently we should always hope that we shall be relieved from all our sorrows, so soon as divine mercy deems the end of our trials has arrived. *Thirdly*,

that we are permitted to use human remedies and natural means to restore ourselves to health; but we must never forget, when so applying them, that they can only be efficacious when blessed by God, but that otherwise the skill of the physician is exhausted in vain, and no balm can heal the wound against which the decree has gone forth that it should hasten the sufferer's end. *Fourthly*, that in order to obtain the blessing of God, we must relinquish all our preconceived opinions of what we may deem right and proper, but should assiduously endeavour to submit without question and reluctance to what religion teaches us, in order that God may bless us and accomplish the desires of our heart. It was said to Naaman, "Bathe thyself and become cleansed;" and the healing which he obtained was the immediate consequence of his fulfilling what he had in this respect been told was the will of God. And, *fifthly*, that the power of God is unlimited by what we call impossibilities and contradictions; with Him the will and the power are inseparably connected, and no matter what the conditions of the case may be, the ability of the Lord to effect his will is not in the slightest degree abridged. Men speak of impossibilities, because they soon feel the extent of their power; they speak of their not knowing, because they speedily discover the limit which their wisdom can attain; they soon complain of weariness and sleepiness, because their endurance has been tasked to the utmost extent of their ability; but with God there is no conceivable want of power, not the remotest idea of a want of mental comprehension, no possibility of weariness and sleep; but He is always in the full enjoyment of strength, his is a con-

stant source of inexhaustible wisdom, and He has an unflagging endurance, and a wakefulness which needs not rest to enable it to stand firm in a new task, to bear with all the hardships which continued toil would require. In short, man is all-dependent, God is self-sufficient; man is powerless, God is omnipotent; man derives his being and whatever comprises it, God is self-existence, perfect and happy in himself, and requires nothing beyond Him to add to his perfection and happiness.

This is the idea which the Decalogue meant to convey of the Supreme, inasmuch as it announced Him as the creative power who punishes and rewards, not according to caprice, but according to the merits of the creatures themselves. To enforce this, to render it permanent, were the subsequent events recorded in the Bible contrived,—to rivet faster and faster in the minds of the people their entire dependence on the sole and only Creator. To effect this, great and small deeds were wrought; the agents were either pious or sinners, high or humble, Israelites or gentiles; and with all it had for the only object contemplated to let the world understand, that the whole economy of creation is the effect of one Being, who is good and beneficent, asking only to be obeyed, in order that the greatest good may be conferred on the greatest numbers; not that He is injured by what is done in the world, but that his creatures might be rendered as happy as their nature will admit of. It is true that nature is also his, and He can alter it to suit his purposes. But we in our limited knowledge know not what is the best for us and others; we cannot tell how the whole economy

is progressing to a point of absolute perfection; we cannot see how the grass grows or the grain ripens; but when we compare the barren field and the burnt-up meadow with the state of luxuriance they present in the bright sunlight of summer, we are conscious of the creative progress which has taken place unseen to us, though our annual experience tells us to expect such a result as certain to occur, to a great extent at least, if not to the self-same degree, in every change of seasons. So it is with the development of the world. A religion was given to us; it has been attested as excellent by the sanctifying influence it has had and still has on those of Israel who submit to its behests; sparks flying, as it were, from the rock on which it was built, shivered, as it has been, by the calamities of a long and still enduring captivity, have kindled a mighty flame all over the face of the globe; the elements are in commotion, there is a chaos in the intellectual world, there are commingled truth and error, light and darkness; but the spirit of God is moving with the swiftness of eagles' wings over the face of the waters, and as the pinions touch the darksome element every now and then a spirit is awakened, and it says, "There is no God in all the earth but in Israel." Ay, it sinks again into the abyss, and its testimony is hushed amidst the roaring of adverse elements; but still the voice has gone abroad, and others will take up the refrain, and new witnesses will be called forward, and new spirits will be awakened, till the whole mass of beings will be ripe for the kingdom of God, as the harvest is ready for the sickle of the harvester; and then will suddenly go forth, as in the beginning, the words "Let

there be light," and there will be light, and darkness will fly away from the face of the new creation, and error, and superstition, and falsehood will be forever banished from the earth, and the new world will stand resplendent in the new light of God's truth, when the Lord himself will be the universal Sun and Shield, as when the lower world emerged from the mass of confused existence on the first day of creation. Let it not be imagined that the world was entirely lifeless before light was called forth from the darkness; there was the Creator's will breathing on the elements, preparing them for the new functions to which they were destined. So, too, in the moral world. The giving of the Decalogue was but the beginning of the end; the elements were set in motion by it; it is the spirit of God which floats over the human mind; it prepares all for the final triumph of truth, and it will prevail, no matter how much the wicked may despise the prophetic people, no matter how many may claim to be possessed of the truth, a better truth than is in Israel. The leprosy which affects the masses must be removed; Israel, as well as the world, will have to be washed of their uncleanness; but it is FAITH IN GOD which will effect this. Unwilling or willing, men will seek to throw off their load, the burden of which afflicts them, in this purifying stream; and when they find themselves restored to primitive innocency, their flesh, as it were, rendered like that of a healthful child, they all will go before those who knew the Lord and worshipped Him during the days of tribulation, and say, "Surely there is no God in all the earth but in Israel only, and we will serve Him alone, who is Creator, Ruler,

and Saviour, who is all in all, the sole God, whose Name be blessed for evermore." Amen.

Nissan 4th. } 5608.
April 7th. }

DISCOURSE XXIII.

THE PATH OF LIFE.

O Thou, whose providence watches over all! let us entreat Thee to guard us in thy goodness, and to hold over us thy protecting arm amidst the contests of the violent, and the assaults of hostile factions. Lo! rumours of strife have reached us, and the remnant of thy people is like a few sheep which have escaped the slaughter only to fall into the power of devouring beasts, with no one to take their part, to snatch them from destruction save Thee, the all-seeing Shepherd. Be it then thy will to have regard to our unprotected state, and be thy arm our protection, thy mercy our shield; and when destruction passes by let it not reach us, and when violence wounds and slays, may it not be permitted to invade our domicil; and let us thus behold Thee in the storm of battle, the tumult of intestine warfare, as the One who leaves not unguarded those who confide in Him, and shields well those who have obtained his favour. So shall we live undiminished and unscathed, and so will we arise and bless thy holy Name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise, glorious and exalted for evermore. Amen.

BRETHREN!

We read in Leviticus xviii. 5, the following words, which are given as the reason for demanding of us the observance of religious duties:

ושמרתם את חקתי ואת משפטי אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם אני ה׳ : ויקרא י״ח ה׳ :

"And ye shall observe my statutes and my ordinances which a man is to do that he may live through them; I am the Lord."

Rashi says to this text in his commentaries, "And live through them in the world to come; for if thou wouldst say, It means this world, the question would arise, Is he not at length compelled to die?" Let us look carefully into the requirements of religion and its consequences. Man in his unreligious state, with passions awakened and with physical developments sufficiently strong to gratify them, will have, can have, no impediment thrown in his way, from rushing upon any animal enjoyment which may be in his power of tasting; he is free to act, and there is no internal check to withhold him; he is the first and only thought to be regarded in his soul, and he feels nothing, and therefore cares nothing, for the injury he may inflict on others. Divine responsibility has no echo in his heart; he knows not God, and therefore does not fear Him, and all mankind are but to him so many beings present to administer to his pleasure or aggrandizement, and he will accordingly endeavour to mould them so as to fit them to become instruments in the gratification of his ambition or pursuit after pleasure. Hence arise murders, incests,

thefts, and all the evils which man inflicts on man in the prosecution of his selfish gratifications. For man without a God is the enemy to all creatures: he is without responsibility, and therefore the most noxious animal in existence, far more destructive than the unchained lion, exceeding in ferocity the savage tiger, and more insatiable in his thirst for blood than a hungry wolf amidst the defenceless sheep of the pasture.

When therefore the Almighty beheld the weakness of untaught human nature, He vouchsafed to reveal himself from the beginning to the men whom He deemed most fitting to be his messengers, and endowed them with wisdom and knowledge, that they might go abroad and teach truth, and mercy, and justice, to their fellows, in order that, thus instructed, society might be bound together by the ties of love and kindness, and all live abstaining from injuring others, and not receiving any injury in return. In short, religion, which is another term for divine revelation, was to cure man of his savage impulsiveness, and teach him that there are higher enjoyments than the mere gratification of base passions; that it is a greater pleasure to preserve than to destroy life; that it is a higher satisfaction to have shielded female innocence than to have sacrificed it to the base impulse of unbridled lust; that it confers more lasting delight to the soul not to have taken our neighbour's property, even in our moment of need, than to have enriched ourselves by appropriating by a violent hand, by fraud, or by stealth, that for which we had not laboured, and which had not come into our hands by voluntary gift or inheritance. It is for the correcting

therefore of the twofold tendency of humanity, that religion was bestowed,—which means that, since we are endowed with an inclination to gratify our impulses and desires, whilst we have at the same time a countercheck within us which cannot satisfy itself about the *justness* of every intended act which we at first resolve upon, we have received an especial guide to instruct us, when it is safe to proceed to satisfy what our inclination for enjoyment demands for its use, and when we are bound to listen to the admonishing voice which whispers into our ear "Beware." It were folly to assert that all enjoyment is sinful, that the flesh is always evil, that nothing but mortification of the outward man is proper for one who loves his God; for this would at once arraign the goodness of our Creator for endowing us with propensities which could only be satisfied at the expense of what is really and universally just and right. But whatever the Almighty has instituted is right; there is nothing in the world, not a propensity in our soul which can be viewed otherwise than beneficent in tendency if only properly applied. It is in all things the measure, and not the quality which constitutes right or wrong, and this measure is *religion*, or the revealed expression of God's will. We use then the terms "good inclination," יצר הטוב, and "evil propensity," יצר הרע, merely in a relative sense, good and evil so far, as they are limited by the law of God, and evil, entirely so, if they lead us beyond the prescribed bounds which Supreme Wisdom has set to them. When therefore a certain commentator expounds "and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" to mean with both the evil *and* good propensities, inas-

much as the word "the heart" might have been given in Hebrew with one ב, thus לבך, *libecha*, instead of two לבבך, *lebabecha*, he justly appreciates our relation to the allwise Creator, and he fully comprehends how there was nothing truly evil in the simple creation which God called into being, till the freedom of will given to man introduced sin into the world, and brought in its train the sorrows and sufferings incident on the altered state, from primitive innocence to a struggle with the vicissitudes thus evoked, and resulting from the misconduct of man. But again, who is there bold enough to assert that even this is altogether unmitigated evil? Who warrants us to maintain that herein too there is not an overruling Providence which guides all to a happy end, and tells the waves of the passions of the human heart, "Thus far and no farther shall you overwhelm the world?"

The earth was assigned as the sphere of man to labour, to exert his faculties, and to progress from infancy to age, collectively no less than individually, till he reach that destination—the end—of which he himself, either as one or as society, has no conception himself. He enters on the stage of life, and so springs a nation, as we did at the foot of Sinai, into being, and he travels on day by day in a state of advancement, unconscious himself of the steps he is taking in the pursuit of his destiny. Ask the most renowned for that which is great and good, whether he contemplated his elevated position at the outset of his career; whether his infancy was marked by any extraordinary development or precocity not equally observable in others much inferior to him in after-years: and you will be told that he was a child like other children,

and sported when they sported, and laughed when they laughed, and that his tears were as ready to start forth at the first pain or disappointment, as in others of his age. And still because he was taught what is right, because he was guided well, because the way was opened to him by providential circumstances, and because he himself subdued the savage heart within him, he has ascended on the path which leads upwards, unconscious to himself, heedless perhaps of the consequences of his own acts and words, till you find him as he is, a blessing to himself, a happiness to others. And yet whilst he lives, he knows not what his end may be, whether he will persevere to the last, and descend to the tomb with the righteousness which he has acquired; but when at length the grave has closed over him, then, and only then, can you speak from experience, that that man has been faithful, and earned, so far as mortals can tell, the approbation of his God. And yet all the trials, all the difficulties, all the evil passions which others encounter, fell to his lot also; no one escapes them; they, like death, are the common lot of humanity. And has the righteous overcome them with triumph; has he been exalted above them even in the eyes of man; have they left his virtue untouched, and placed him in a brighter and holier light before other mortals like himself; nay, have they called forth in him high and noble traits, which otherwise might have lain dormant: who can say that his lot has not been ultimately a happier one, his exaltation more enviable, for the very evils which beset his path, just as the sunlight appears lovelier after a storm, when the envious clouds are chased away by the wind of heaven,

after having hidden it from the face of the earth?—And nations are but aggregations of individuals; their fate cannot be surveyed in the lifetime of a single person, and ages may and must succeed each other, ere they arrive at maturity, before they are properly placed on the page of history. We may trace them, their phases, their rise, their progress, and, if you will, their fall; but while they exist, we cannot say with certainty that they have attained to their end. They may flourish or be subdued; they may rule or be tributary; they may be numerous or reduced to a few individuals; but still while their existence is marked on the stage of life, while they are perceived by their characteristics, their features, and their laws, they are present to rise again from their fall, their degradation, their low estate, to stand once more, and, if God will, forever unshaken, as the light of the world, as the means of happiness for all the rest of mankind; and the very evils through which they had to pass, the extermination almost which threatened them, may render them more fitted to fulfil the destiny for which they were created.

Life is brief; but eternity—who can measure its duration? our place is narrow; but who can determine the extent of space, the dwelling of our God—the Holy One who abideth eternally? And still we are a portion of everlasting life, an emanation of the Unlimited in extent and power. He framed us from the dust of the earth, so says the book which He has written; but He also breathed into our nostrils the soul of life, understand "life," the undying essence which perishes not as the brute that passes away, and the body of which is mingled with the clod of

the valley. But with life and the intellect therewith combined, without restraint or check, what would man have been, but the most destructive of all animals! and if one doubts this, let him examine the records of history, and he will read of atrocities which make the blood run cold, and crimes which make the flesh creep, all perpetrated under the unbridled influence of lawless passions. It is possible, that since man was created in the image of God,—since he has an appreciation of virtue inly implanted in his heart, he might, after long and laborious struggles, at length have arrived at defining some rules by which a government might have been carried on, securing to each man the possession of life and its acquisitions; but even with this concession in favour of the human mind, unaided by God, what effect could this have had on eternity? where would have been the certainty that acts of the nature described had secured us the approbation of God? But it may be safely denied that human reason alone was ever able to frame equitable laws for a general government, or that there ever was a time when some direct communication of the will of God was unknown to mankind; for the sustaining of the first position, we may cite the barbarities of heathen nations, and for the second the biblical evidence that, with the cessation of the flood, the Lord revealed to Noah the principles of justice, evidenced in the inviolability of human life so strongly enjoined. But these few laws were, as can easily be seen, not enough to govern the world when population became denser, and the interests thereby existing more complicated and diversified. We, therefore, may assume that, although not written down, other

precepts were ordained; since we find Abraham commended for observing God's charges, commandments, statutes, and laws, which doubtless included rules for justice, charity, and obedience to parental authority, or the main pillars which support society. Probably these laws were traditional, handed down by oral precept, as we read of Abraham, "And he built there an altar and proclaimed in the name of the Lord," evidently the duties pertaining to a profession of faith, and it was this especial mark which distinguished Abraham and his household at first, and afterwards his own descendants and their adherents, from the rest of the community where they lived, and called down on them the promise of divine protection.

But this was not yet the end of Abraham's destiny; he was to receive a still higher life, a brighter existence; and this was accomplished at the revelation of the divine glory on Horeb, when the laws of God were not left any farther to the perishableness of mere tradition, but were given over in the form of a code, civil and religious, to the charge of an entire people, who were appointed to watch over its preservation, because their ancestors had obeyed the will of God in whatever had been demanded of them, and thus obtained the promise of an everlasting covenant from their Maker. Moses was, therefore, justly empowered to tell the people that they should not go after the ordinances of the land of Egypt where they had dwelt, nor follow the practices of the land of Canaan whither they were going; simply because neither were in accordance with the dictates of the Lord, who had not approved of the inventions of fallible men in instituting such absurdities and crimes, and enforcing

them as religious duties. But he was told to say: "My laws of justice shall ye observe, and my statutes shall you keep to walk in them; I am the Lord your God:" meaning, that the laws we had received were not emanating from a fallible mortal, but from the supreme Source of wisdom and power, whose words are true, and in whose judgment there is no possible room for error or deception. But not alone this; for it is not an arbitrary system which we are to follow; not one which is solely intended to magnify Him, and to render us the subjects of his kingdom; for, continues the message, "And ye shall observe my statutes and my ordinances, which a man is to do that he may live in them." This means, there are many practices of the gentiles which are hurtful to life, which are subversive of piety, injurious to the welfare of the state; but if you observe the ordinances of the Bible, you will not only escape these dangers, but you will obtain by them life and happiness. And says the commentator, "But how is life to be preserved? has not every man, no matter how good he is, however observant of all the laws, ultimately to pay the forfeit of all mankind? must he not yield his spirit and return to the earth from which his body has sprung?" He then answers: "The life promised is the future state, where the existence is permanent, where the interruptions which disturb our earthly life are not any more to be dreaded; but if one has once entered therein he will be forever in the presence of God, and bask in the great light which issues from the mercy of the Creator." The verse, therefore, properly concludes, not with the usual "I am the Lord your God," or the One who has done you

so many benefits, and therefore asks this service as a return of grateful feelings, but simply "I am the Lord," or, as the Hebrew term is the symbol of the permanence of the Deity, "I am the Everlasting;" thus saying that the reward promised for obedience will be commensurate with the divine existence, and as this is everlasting, so will also be the recompense which obedience will obtain at his hands: not like the riches of the earth, which are acquired in toil and sorrow, and are often taken in the twinkling of an eye; or human glory, which is not rarely purchased with the tears of the orphan and the sobs of the widow, and which at length barely endures for a night; or human power, which leaves a man in the midst of his exaltation a byword and a reproach to his enemies; but those treasures which require no miser's care to hoard them, which the worm cannot devour nor the moth destroy; that glory which springs from devotion to God and the light issuing from his own essence, over which others shed no tears, and which excites no sorrow in the breast of aught that lives; that exaltation which is the offspring of acceptability with the Lord, over which no enemies can prevail, and of which not all the powers of the world can deprive the possessor. In short, the state of the righteous who *live* through the faith and works prescribed to us, will be analogous to the divine existence, which is not marred by bodily suffering and by mental darkness, and which is not interrupted by death, which has not any power or dominion over those who dwell under the shadow of the Lord's protection.

If now they who follow the commandments of God

are beset in their travels through life with dangers and difficulties; if they see themselves pursued by the malevolence of their enemies, and scorned by hollow-hearted friends; if they see their efforts followed by disappointment, and their labour exerted in vain; if ill health seems attached to them as an heirloom from their birth to their grave: they must not repine at the hard lot which is thus assigned them; they should feel that the more they endure here, the more will their virtues be purified, the more will they be cleansed from iniquity, the more will they be rendered fit to come unspotted, freed from the pollution of earthly life, into the presence of Him who is the Holiest and Purest; who is, moreover, the righteous Judge, who never sends any dispensation without a wise motive, and who, being unforgetting, will not let a single deed, a single suffering of theirs pass, without assigning reward for the one and giving them a due recompense for the other, if it was borne in meekness and resignation to his just decrees, He being the perfect God, with whom there is no unrighteousness or iniquity.

And as individuals are thus promised life in the law, we as a nation must likewise expect to have existence and permanence through the same means. I stated that both nations and individuals have their end, the object for which they were created; that for the individual, we see, is that he is to be rendered truly and permanently happy, without sorrow or pain; that for our nation must be analogous, though not identical, since *nationalities*, with our means for arriving at a correct judgment, are but existences of the earth, of life in this world, inapplicable to the disem-

bodied state. As human beings living on the earth, in the midst of mortals, then, must we look for our destiny, and as such we must become identified with the living God. But how? can we then see Him and live, when Moses, the prophet of prophets, could not? But the question answers itself, when we look at the first institution of our race as a people. When Abram left Haran by the command of God, he was told that he should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. He was then but a wanderer, a childless man of the age of seventy-five years, alone, unknown in the country assigned to him as the future residence of his descendants. Still he went forward on his mission in full confidence of the truth of the word of God, though he could not understand how it was to be accomplished; it spoke of descendants when he was childless; it spoke of blessings, and soon famine compelled him to leave his new home for the land of Egypt; and when at length after the son of promise had been born, and he hoped thus to see the fulfilment of his hopes, he was ordered to bring him for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which the Lord would show him. Nevertheless, amidst all these doubts and trials, he never wavered, he believed in the Lord, who reckoned it to him as righteousness. After him came Isaac, and then Israel, and after a period of more than two hundred years since the mission of Abraham, the whole number of worshippers of the One God was less than a hundred persons, connected with the family of the patriarch. And still there was no defection, no complaining at the slow fulfilment of the promise, that in them all the earth should be blessed. It was enough that God had

promised, and they lived forward to meet the accomplishment, come when it might, though delayed age after age, and century after century. Again peace fled from our race, and we were kept in bondage and held to labour for so long a time, that we were defiled with the idols of Eygpt; but hope fled not from the breast of all, and there were those who clung with unshaken faith to God, till the time of the fulfilment, when we as a nation were publicly betrothed and espoused by the great Father of mankind, to be his own, his peculiar treasure, his kingdom of priests, his holy nation. But even then we stood alone, solitary amidst the families of the earth, in the invocation of the Holy Name, which is reverenced among the angels. Yet it was the commencement of the great accomplishment of the covenant with Abraham; seventy males had now increased to sixty myriads, and in the mouth of two millions of human beings was the Lord of heaven invoked as their God and Creator. We next arrived in Palestine, and increased in power and intelligence, and the fame of our commonwealth spread far over the East and the countries to the South; but still we stood alone, and we had no associates to join us in our testimony against the vanities and idols of mankind. And though our state fell at last a prey to our transgressions, and our iniquities destroyed our sanctuary, the religion, which is ours, did not perish, and survives even now as the glory of the sons of Jacob. O! how did we suffer since the day that Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of his guards to burn our temple! O how weary were our wanderings since a second time the holy of holies was entered with fire and sword, under the cruellest of all oppres-

sors, Titus, the Roman general, and his unpitying legions! But for all this, we adhered, few of us at least, to the statutes of the Lord, and thus we live in and through the commandments which we received at Sinai. As yet we have not ceased, as yet our destiny is not accomplished, because our end has not come; nor are all the families of the earth blessed in Abraham and his descendants. But we are hastening to the accomplishment; event crowds on events; falsehood sinks after falsehood; and who can doubt that truth at length will triumph? Who can gainsay that at length the Lord alone will reign on earth? Yea, Abraham, Isaac, Israel, and Moses, faltered not: why then should we falter, when the prospect is so much brighter, the hope so much more likely, according to human reasoning even, to be accomplished? So then let us hold fast to the Law, adhere firmly to our God, and invoke in humility his blessing on us and all mankind, and pray that He may speedily send the Messiah to restore peace on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

Nissan 26th.
April 28th. } 5608.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

EQUALITY OF MEN.

O Lord God! whose servants we are, and who hast chosen us to be thy own treasure, be with us and our spirit, and prosper us in our undertakings, whether these be to provide food for our household, or to acquire a knowledge of thy ways, a knowledge more priceless than pearls, and more refreshing to the soul than healing balsam is to wounded limbs. O! how blessed are those whom Thou blessest! how well guarded are those whom Thou guardest! and where then shall we look for blessing and protection but from Thee, in whose hands are the power and the dominion over all? Yea to whom shall Israel fly for aid, if it be not to Thee their God, their Guardian? Let us then entreat Thee to have regard to our lowly state, and save us from the grasp of the violent, against whose uplifted arm we have no strength to defend ourselves, whose wrath would overwhelm us, if we were to rely on mere human aid to defend us. And let it be made evident that we are indeed thy servants whom Thou hast chosen, thy own inheritance whom Thou hast deputed to make known thy ways and thy laws to mankind. Yes, bless us as Thou hast blessed our fathers, and let through us thy Name be glorified, for our happiness and the welfare of all mankind. Amen.

Brethren!

The principles of the Jewish religion are evident upon a simple inspection of its details, they are in brief the purification of the human heart, and to induce it to practise acts of kindness to all others, who can be reached by any deed of ours. Man, by means of the precepts of our faith, is taken from his state of isolation and loneliness, and placed in one of alliance and fraternal union with all others who like him are composed of the same elements, body and soul, and who are therefore not merely fellow-mortals, like him, subject to decay, but also fellow-beings, whose fate cannot be of right a matter of indifference to him. The reverence due to the Deity from whom everything has sprung is, at the same time, alike incumbent on all, as all have the same origin, and consequently the same relative position to their Author. In Judaism therefore no man is without a neighbour, as little as he can be without a God; and in the same measure as he is bound to serve the Lord and to acknowledge Him in spirit, so is he bound to serve his fellow-men in whatever is within his power, and to recognize in each of them an equal and a brother. The rich and the proud may perhaps be disposed to look upon themselves as peculiarly favoured by Providence, or, as they generally call it, by fortune and circumstances, and therefore elevated above the ordinary level of mortals, and that they therefore have an inherent right to claim the services and respect of others, without repaying them to a greater extent than is agreeable to their own views, irrespective of the opinions which the others may entertain. They may in this wise fancy themselves not bound by the same

rules of conduct which bind others; since their very position is, in their opinion, proof enough that a peculiar degree of leniency is to be extended to them, which applies not to common men. Hence it is not rare to hear the crimes, which would disgrace the labourer, considered venial offences if committed by the higher orders, falsely so called; and drunkenness from wine at the tables of the rich is excused as a trifling foible, whereas the labourer would be deservedly condemned for inebriety produced by vulgar intoxicating drinks. But in truth, reason and common sense cannot tolerate such a distinction; crime is crime, whether it is dressed in royal purple or the shepherd's gray vestment; and the filthiness of a rich voluptuary is equally disgusting with that of the meanest vagabond in the world. One common fate awaits all; and whether you are reposing on gilt couches, courting slumber on the softest down and under silken coverlets, or tossing on a hard plank with scarcely a rag to cover you against the inclemency of winter, death will cut short your career, and you will be borne to the grave, and you will moulder equally under a marble monument which recounts virtues which you never possessed, and in a sepulchre without a single token to tell the world the name of the unknown wanderer who here expects his awakening. The earthly happiness of man consists but in the degree of exemption which he may enjoy from some cares which oppress others; but free from them altogether, and exempt from the decree of dissolution, he is not; and for all the greatest and most favoured can know, the veriest hind, the meanest slave who

administers to their pleasures may have joys of which they can have no conception.

The Mosaic Law therefore looks upon all mankind as equals, and prescribes for them the same regulations. It is impossible, it is true, from the organization of society, that all men shall have the same pursuit; for if this were so, there could be no advancement in society, because every one would then have to toil in one uniform round to provide for himself whatever he may want for food and clothing; and as each man's powers are exceedingly limited, he could make only very small progress, even in satisfying the simplest cravings of nature. Elegance and mental progress would be totally out of the question; since the longest period of human existence would not leave the time to enable a man to do more than merely prolong his existence, and then there must be no interruption from disease and any of the other causes which retain men in a state of inaction, such as infancy and age. If, however, as it is now, men have various pursuits, which are indicated to them in a multitude of providential ways; since invention is stimulated by the co-operation of many to effect a common end: society acquires a solidity, and each individual, and this under the worst circumstances, such an increase of means of happiness and enjoyment, as the solitary hermit, who has never lived in society, can have no conception of. The wants of man bind the human family in one mass, like the staves of a barrel are confined and bound together by the hoops which are firmly driven around them. Each individual stave is a useless article by itself; but let a number be set up and firmly and properly united,

and you have the most useful domestic articles, which administer in a countless variety to the comfort of man.—But whilst it is for the happiness of all that pursuits should vary, it is evidently no disgrace to any one to follow an humbler calling than his neighbour, either from preference or necessity. Every one cannot be a leader, or there would be no one to be led, and consequently no authority; but it is equally preposterous for the authority to imagine that he is there and thus for his own sake, and that, because he is chief, society is bound to him, and not he to society. On the contrary, whoever can and does contribute something to the general welfare has an undoubted claim, by a natural deduction of sound common sense, to the general consideration and protection, and therefore a right to expect relief and kindness, if his own powers fail, and he be thrown through sickness, age, or other causes of helplessness, upon the commiseration of the world at large. His loneliness, his want of power, his inability to repay kindness, is then no bar to his claim for mercy; he has laboured whilst he could, he contributed his all that his physical ability allowed him, that his mental acquirements permitted him to accomplish; and he is a brother among brothers, a man amongst his fellows, and they cannot, dare not, let him perish, but should of right administer to his wants, and smooth for him his descent to the grave. What is it to you, that your brother's name was never trumpeted abroad among the famous ones of the earth? it was not his calling to do mighty deeds, to strike out great and astonishing thoughts; but still he is a creature like yourselves, a body and soul, the work of the same Being who

endowed you with power, wisdom, and wealth; have therefore pity on him in his distress, that your Father above may have consideration on your sorrows when affliction reaches you also. Suppose a house is to be built, it is not the architect who can unaided succeed in accomplishing all his splendid designs and beautiful arrangements; but builders and masons must assist him, and even these will have their work greatly abridged by having mere labourers, who can neither design nor execute, to bring from a distance the materials which are to be wrought up into shape and placed in order; and when a palace or temple is finished, though no one dreams of the poor carrier of wood, stone, and mortar, though the giant mind who devised the pile alone is celebrated for the work to the exclusion of all others: it is still evident that all who wrought thereon have some claim to be considered its builders, or at the least promoters of its construction.—Society is thus ramified, so widely extended in a vast variety of pursuits and employments; and whoever is not idle, and follows up his task to the best of his intellect, has fulfilled all that can be demanded of him.

Still some who, because they have wealth and power, need not labour, may think that those whose lot it is to provide for their wants are their inferiors, of a clay not as pure and refined as that out of which their body is framed, with a soul not as elevated as that which was breathed into their own nostrils. But if they would only reflect one instant, they would be cured of their vain and unholy dream. If the labourers are so inferior as they imagine, let them contrive for once to do without their aid; let them plough

the field themselves, let them reap the harvest, let them thresh out the corn, let them grind it into flour, let them knead the dough and bake the bread: and then if they discover that all this is too much for them to do, they must at the same time acknowledge that they are fully as much indebted to the labourers, to them unknown, who supply them with their daily food, as these can be for the amount of pay they obtain in their turn. The rich have distinction and favour enough by being exempt from bodily labour: still it is only that they may have the means to purchase it, not that they can exist without its being performed, which is the lot assigned them; consequently the labourer is their equal in the scale of humanity for all their arrogance and assumption, and they have no right to assign him a lower degree as man, simply because they pay and he labours. Their money will, it is true, make him comfortable, it will give him the means to purchase what he requires; but then the labour he performs renders a service also to his employers, without which, whether done by others or themselves, they could not eat, nor drink, nor have garments, nor a house to dwell in.

These views are developed simply from a consideration of the mutual wants of society; if now religion is in consonance with them, we must confess that reason and religion coincide, and that hence the revealed will of God has a responding voice in the human mind, and demands therefore an implicit obedience, even without taking into view that the execution of the precepts will have an abiding effect, after the spirit shall have gone to its eternal rest in the presence of its Creator. Whatever now may be said

by those who do not understand Judaism, or those who look at it with the jaundiced eye of prejudice, it is pre-eminently a religion of reason, of social progress, and freedom, and equality. It places men in society, not in isolated, however high, positions; it recognizes the right of acquiring wealth by labour and ingenuity; it permits inventions and discoveries; it encourages learning and refinement; but what is more than all, it places every man on an absolute equality in the eyes of the law with his neighbour, though he be poor, and the other the wealthiest in the land. Crime in the poor is crime in the rich, and infirmities of temper in the one are the same in the other. Besides this, the poor never loses for the sake of his mere poverty his consideration in the state; because the state of the Lord consists of individual Israelites, not of rich and powerful landholders and merchants, of generals and princes; but whoever has his birth or adoption in the state is hedged round by the power of the law, and his property and his personal liberty are held inviolable, and if he loses both or either by misfortune, he ceases not for all this to be an object of the tenderest care to the code under which the state is established. It is no idle declamation which asserts that the Mosaic religion has furnished us an example, the first and highest, how a state can be practically free under the operation of well-defined legal enactments on the one hand, and obedience of all the citizens on the other. Take whatever other state you please, and you never will discover any stronger guarantees for the attainment of the object just mentioned than in the books of Moses. You may, as men, differ about the policy

of enforcing all the particular injunctions at the present day, in the altered state of the world; but no one can dispute that it has succeeded in establishing the great pillars of social equality: responsibility to the laws, protection to all, obedience by all, freedom to pursue any calling which a man's circumstances or capacity may impel him to choose, and at length universal love and benevolence. By thus constituting the kind impulses of our natures a portion of his legislation, Moses, in the name of God, has sanctified, by throwing over them the mantle of religion, what we are apt to deem mere exercises of pleasant duties; whilst it impresses those whose miserly, or indifferent, loveless disposition might induce them to look with callous apathy on their neighbours' sorrows, that they are bound to overcome this cruelty of heart, and succour the distressed, as much as they would from a pride for their fair name, and fear of incurring punishment, practise the usual rules of honesty and fair dealing towards those to whom they are indebted, or who are indebted to them. Though therefore unbelievers and heathens may be as benevolent as the Israelite, he has a superadded motive, that of doing an act pleasing to and commanded by his God; by which means he will have a powerful incentive to forgive and to be kind even to those who have done him a personal injury, seeing that his enemies too are his brothers, children of the same God, and therefore entitled to his indulgence and forgiveness; and thus he can, conquering his own ill-will, render them kindness for the wrong they have done him, and he will serve them in the hour of their need, although he owes them no gratitude.

In truth, brethren, you need not be ashamed, as citizens of a free republic, for being followers of Moses; you have not in your religion to mystify or to explain away any doctrines relating to society, which, carried into literal execution, would be subversive of the state. Justice, mercy and truth should be the basis of every commonwealth, of every monarchy even, since kings too, when they rule, should govern in the principles which promote human happiness; but no free state, where the people are the source of power, can prosper wherein these eternal safeguards of mankind are lost sight of. And as they are the foundation of the social law of Moses, and as not one of his enactments is opposed to them, and as, on the contrary, they all tend to promote them in the highest degree, since they repress violence, encourage benevolence, and counsel man to speak the truth as it is in his heart: the law which is our inheritance is of right the one which may be called the first, and hitherto the only religious code which combines safe rules of government with directions for the personal holiness of the individuals. And if even, as already said, men have substituted different degrees of punishment for those first revealed through Moses, arbitrarily substituting their fancies for what God had decreed as right: they nevertheless have in the main proceeded to legislate on the great basis of the Ten Commandments, on the foundation of which the other precepts of our religion have been erected, as a superstructure on an immovable basis, one which is unalterably true, and must remain so, though the earth should wax old as

a garment, and the light of the sun and the moon be extinguished from our horizon.

The above reflections just presented to you are well connected with the Parashah of to-day, in which are laid down the principles on which the land of Israel was to be cultivated, in what manner each individual was to be restored to his freedom and his paternal possessions, how land was to be sold, ordinary bargains between man and man were to be made, and how charity was to be conferred, and lastly how servants were to be treated when they were compelled from a pressure of poverty to forego for a time their personal freedom and seek service and protection in the houses of those whose means were more ample, whether these were native Israelites, or idolatrous strangers who had taken up their abode and acquired wealth in Palestine. It is perhaps curious to a casual observer that in every instance the word אח "brother" is used, to denote the unfortunate who had from the force of circumstances to sell his estate, and at another time to forego his personal freedom, or to seek for aid from his fellow-mortal. But as the Bible never uses a word without a good cause and well-defined purpose, we must assume that as much is taught by the phraseology of the precept, as by the precept, itself. What I have said already will answer the question regarding the rights of Israelites in their state; it is simply this: whether we purchase another's land, his own personal liberty, or aid a man to the extent of his wants, we have no right to assume towards him any arrogance or pride; since no matter how prosperous we be, and how lowly he be sunk, we are at best no more than he is; he is our fellow-man, our brother,

our neighbour, and the service which we render him, in the instances mentioned, is no more than he has an absolute right to expect from us; because we have received our prosperity only that we might become thereby serviceable to those who stand in need of our aid. So, then, says the text:

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך : ויקרא כה' לה' :

"And if thy brother become poor, and let his hand sink near thee, then shalt thou render him assistance, whether he be a stranger or sojourner, that he can live with thee." Lev. xxv. 35.

There is no stipulation made here as to the cause of poverty, nor who the poor one is, whether he be even not an Israelite, but one who has sought a home under our benignant laws; it is all the same, he is entitled to aid, to comfort, to being lifted up from his lowly estate, he is a brother, so that he may be able to live near us. Understand, the precept is not here as to mere almsgiving, to turn away a poor man with a small donation which is soon expended; but a higher, a more self-sacrificing duty is inculcated, it is that of endowing the poor brother with means to help himself, by which he may step out from the position of lowliness to take his place amidst the nobles of the land, those who though now the wealthy and the honoured are at last nothing more than his brothers, his fellow-citizens, whose equal he is of right, and whose associate in honour and consideration he may become hereafter, if God only blesses his labour, and sends prosperity to the works of his hands. In thus

bestowing aid we were warned not to look to our own interest, not to make the necessities of the unhappy petitioner subservient to our own advantage. No, as God had freely blessed us, so should we freely bless our neighbour; we should lend him our money without interest, and our food without increase, satisfied with having discharged in a small degree our obligation to Heaven, by the mercy which we show to those whom He has afflicted, in order that we may see his judgments, and which circumstance gives us an opportunity to prove that we are not unworthy stewards of his bounty, and that though prosperous we have not forgotten the One by whose gracious will "our mountain has been made to stand firm," whose sunshine has ripened our grain, whose grass has fed our flocks, and whose favouring gales have wafted our ships over the dangerous deep into the haven of safety. The precept therefore fittingly concludes: "I am the Lord your God, who have brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give unto you the land of Canaan, to be unto you a God," meaning, Look back on the dreadful state of debasement in which you were plunged, slaves as you were to Pharaoh in Egypt, not permitted to labour for yourselves, your very life depending on a tyrant's will. And from this thraldom you were released, in order to render you free, enlightened, and acquainted with the pure worship of the One Eternal, who would give you a beautiful country as a home, where you can, if you but will, establish a happy commonwealth, protected by equal and uniform laws; wherefore it well becomes you as liege subjects of this God to be uni-

versally merciful, and to shower the gifts which have been bestowed on you with a liberal hand over all whom your benevolence can lift up, whom your kindness may be able to comfort.—O blessed Charity! how sweet is thy image which floats before the despairing, suffering poor! how benignant is thy smile when thy eye beameth on the hapless ones whose home is lonely, whose heart is desolate! O come! and dwell in our hearts, blessed image of thy Creator, sweet soother of human care! O speak comfort to the mourner, and lift up the soul of the trembling sufferer, who else might fear to meet an enemy in each brother, and a mocker in all who behold his grief. Come! and be to us a messenger of our God, and abide with us to the end of days, that joy may fill our hearts for mercy bestowed on all our species, for the tears we have dried up, and for the new hopes we have kindled in the bereaved spirit. Come! be to us a light of salvation, that loving our fellow-man we may rise to the pure love of God, to serve Him, to be his people, to love, to adore Him, till the utmost length of days. Amen.

Iyar 16th. } 5608
May 19th. }

DISCOURSE XXV.

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD.

May the name of the Lord be blessed forever; for the power and the government are his, and He raiseth up kings, and He casteth down kings, and without Him nations labour in vain attempts, and if He withholds his protection, all nature stands affrighted and astonished at his presence. This is our God, whom we worship; this is our Father, whom we adore, because He created the world in the beginning, and erected the foundations of the earth by his own mighty will; and when it pleased Him, He descended before his redeemed servants and pointed out to them the way of life, how they might walk in his presence, and obtain his gracious favour by obedience. May it then be his will to plant his love and his fear in our hearts, that we may direct to Him our thoughts, and always consult the inspiration which He has vouchsafed to us in his word, before we act or resolve on any course of life; so that we may be supported by his love, and discover his goodness in whatever may be dispensed to us in his wise and righteous judgment. So shall our life pass away in pleasantness and peace, and contentment dwell in our habitations, till we be summoned to the high abode of the pure and holy, who are blessed by the light of the countenance of their Almighty Father, who will shield and uphold

them, as those who are precious in his eyes, and whom He will bless with everlasting life. Amen.

BRETHREN:

In our lesson of to-day, there is given to us the form of the priestly blessing, which the sons of Aaron are to pronounce over the people, and thus invoke for them the aid and countenance of the Great Eternal, whose name shall be glorified in the mouth of all the living, as follows:

יברכך ה׳ וישמרך: יאר ה׳ פניו אליך ויחנך: ישא
ה׳ פניו אליך וישם לך שלום: במד׳ ו׳ כד׳–כו׳:

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Numb. vi. 24–26.

The words are almost the simplest which could be devised, and they could only have sprung from the spirit of God himself; for human invention would have added other matters — would have amplified, and not appealed in so few expressions for all that we can ask of our heavenly Father. Yes, even David in his Psalms, when he asked for the same favours, though he too spoke from the spirit that dwelt in him, used, in his sixty-seventh Psalm, many more words to petition the Lord for the favours embraced in the ברכת כהנים (Priestly Blessing). It is even thus that we may appeal to the absence of all ornament and amplification in the Mosaic books, to the extreme and severe simplicity which they present when speaking of both precept and doctrine, for an additional testimony of their sacredness and truth; and we may

insist that their author was so thoroughly convinced of what he wrote, for the instruction of the people, to be the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that he disdained borrowing from the orator and the poet any embellishment which they employ to render their words and thoughts pleasant to their hearers or readers. But, few as the words are, simple as is the construction of the three sentences comprising the blessing, they are of the utmost importance and significance.

Let us refer, as we have done already, to the sixty-seventh Psalm, and we will find the following words אלהים יחננו ויברכנו יאר פניו אתנו סלה "May God be gracious unto us and bless us; may He cause his face to shine with us. Selah." But the passage in Numbers vi. 24–26, commences, יברך ה' וישמרך "The Lord bless and keep thee;" thus using a different phrase from David when speaking of the Deity, nevertheless referring to the same great Being as the Author of all blessings. You may readily imagine that there is a deep design why Moses was bidden to use the term he did, and that it is of high importance to us, even at this late date in the history and progress of mankind, notwithstanding a great change has taken place in the condition of the world since that time, to ascertain it. I will endeavour to make myself understood, and beg of you to devote due attention to the perhaps dry definitions which I deem it my duty to give you. When Moses was first commissioned to speak to the Israelites, he asked of God: "Behold, I come to the children of Israel and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and if they then say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto

them?" This question may appear to you very singular; you may say, perhaps, Would it not be enough for Moses to tell the people that God had deputed him to effect their liberation? and if they would believe him at all, must not this announcement satisfy them? Besides, what is there in the name of God, that should render it of so much importance, as to effect in Moses's estimation the mission with which he had been sent by the *word* which had then been, for the first time, revealed to him?

But you must reflect that when Moses was addressing the Deity in the above words, there was not that revealed knowledge of the great Adored which is now so widely diffused abroad; everywhere there were associations either of two or three persons in the idea which men entertained of God, or at least, there were a multitude of real or imaginary beings, who were conceived all to have some divine attribute, that is, all to be more powerful than man, and, therefore, claiming his homage. These gods were each known by a particular appellation, under which worship was offered to the same; and as each country had its own peculiar mythology, its own divan of gods, nations might be aptly called the people of the one or the other god or group of gods, of which examples may be found in Scripture, which, however, it would be out of place to detail in this connexion. The earth was thus parcelled out among different tutelary powers, as much as there was a diversity of language, complexion, and manners.

Moses himself, though a descendant of Israel, had imbibed in Egypt a knowledge of the customs and ideas of the people, and of the priests of that land;

and there can be no doubt but that the Israelites had universally been deeply tinctured with the superstitions and idolatry that prevailed around them. I need not remind you how apt we are to borrow the views of those who surround us at all sides, and how different appear the Jews of the East and the West, simply because of the people in the midst of whom they live. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that a residence of two hundred and ten years in Egypt, for a very great period of which time we were subject to the arbitrary cruelties of the idolaters, had vitiated whatever knowledge we had derived from the patriarchs of the nature of God; and though Moses may at the time have been free from idolatry himself (indeed, we ought to entertain the opinion that as he was chosen the instrument of a great deed, he was meritorious in the sight of God, by being a devoted servant and true believer), he spoke for and of the people, according to the ideas prevailing at his time, and demanded, therefore, the name of the national God, to report the message with which he had been charged in his name and behalf. Understand, the liberation of the Israelites was to be effected against the evident will and interest of the Egyptians, consequently, also against the supposed assent of the gods of that country, assuming for them a power to prevent it, as was alleged by their worshippers. It was, therefore, none of the Egyptian deities, in whose name the message could be spoken; perhaps they had been called by the same general appellation* which the Israelites

* The word God, in its various forms, signifies, in European languages, the being or beings to whom worship is rendered, hence it is equally applicable to the Supreme or false divinities. If now,

had given to their ancestral God. But, be this as it may, Moses found no distinctive name in his recollection which would inspire that confidence which he considered, and justly so, as the first requisite to the accomplishment of that mission which had been forced upon him to fulfil, unwilling and fearful as he was to

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the patriarchs only knew of a term which embraced the idea of power or greatness, as the Almighty, Most High, or God; and if the Egyptians called their gods by names significant of the same idea embraced in these terms: it was evidently nothing distinctive to speak of the God who then spoke to Moses, by any one of the names or attributes of the divinity then known. But the name then revealed in reply to his inquiry was, of all others, the one which had not been invented by man, because not within his finite idea of conceiving, unless it be by the aid of the Lord himself. It is, therefore, that we may assume, that the name we have received as the expression of God's eternity, is the proper appellation embracing, at the same time, UNITY and ETERNITY, as we say ה' אחד ושמו אחד "The Eternal is ONE, and his name is ONE," in contradistinction to other ideas which conceive the divine essence to consist of a combination of powers, and consequently not ONE in name, however great the attributes may be, which are ascribed to the divine nature, thus exhibited in the belief which embraces the idea of a plurality. Some persons think that the Jews would not be Jews except out of opposition to other creeds, or because they interpret certain scriptural passages differently from others; but neither of these views is true. We are Jews because we have received a peculiar revelation; and we remain so, not because there is any importance to be attached to the few alleged fulfilments of prophecy, but because any other belief in the nature of the Divinity and the divine legation of the prophets is hostile to the very principles on which we were established as a people, and for the upholding of which, the revelation of Sinai was given to us. We would teach the same doctrines whether there were *Mahomedans* in the world or not; their presence may compel us to reply to their assumptions; but it does not have any real influence on our peculiar doctrines; they are always true, and always derivable from the same source of information, the Scriptures themselves, and them only.

return to Egypt. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, as He had announced himself, was not angry with Moses for the question which he had put, and in mercy enlightened his ignorance; and in so doing, He did not give him any name which is of arbitrary derivation, as many proper names are, but He employed the *future* tense of the verb *to be*, or in other words, He called himself I WILL BE, in Hebrew, אהיה (EHYEH), or as given otherwise, in the combination of the future and the present tenses of the root היה, with the four letters יהוה, embracing the idea of "He who was, is, and will be." Jews now consider this revelation of God of himself and his being so sacred that they do not pronounce it as it is written, and it was only used on certain solemn occasions, such as when the high priest made his public confession on the Day of Atonement, or when the priests pronounced the blessings on the people in the temple; at other times, it is pronounced as though it were written אדני ADONAY, equivalent to the English word "Lord." The national God of the Hebrews was not, according to this view, to be known by any name denoting his other attributes, but that expressing his eternity; and as this name is incapable of a plural, at least it is never found in the plural, and is thus referring to ONE only, and this invariably throughout Scripture: we shall have better means than otherwise of understanding the phrase, which we also owe to Moses, and which constitutes the creed of the Jews, I mean ה' אלהינו ה' אחד "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." We know that the word אלהים is often used in the plural, either to signify idols, or the gods of the nations; or angels, as the messengers of God; or at last judges, as the human beings who

are placed in authority. The word *Elohim*, *divine*, does not, therefore, carry in Hebrew, by any means, the same sacred character as it does in English or other modern language; as it is merely an expression of *power*, either actual or imaginary, and is, in truth, derived from אל "power," "strength," or "might." There can, therefore, be false אלהים, as אלהים אחרים; or not-gods לא אלוה, things having neither power nor being, as they exist merely in their divine idea in the arbitrary assumption of their worshippers; whilst at the same time the term may, with equal propriety, be applied to the Holiest and Highest, the God whom we worship. And as the form is *plural*, so may the idea be which we have of the divine nature in its being the source of all power, or the totality of the forces of nature centred in ONE who directs all; the verb or adjective belonging to it may, therefore, occasionally be met with in the plural number, not as indicating a multitude or aggregation of persons in the Godhead, but as agreeing in form merely with the substantive expressing the Divine Being. I have spoken of this on a previous occasion, and only refer to it now in combination with the subject before us. We call God, therefore, either אל or אלוה, the universal power, in the singular, or אלהים, the aggregation of all imaginable powers in one, in the plural, in contradistinction to the worshipped beings of other people which are un-gods, לא אלוה, or foreign, strange, other gods, אלהים אחרים.

It is somewhat curious, let us note in this place, that with suffixes, which answer to the possessive pronouns in English and other languages, we always find the word God construed in the plural, with the ex-

ception when applied to the first person singular, which alone derived its form either from the root אל or אלהים thus אלי *Eli*, or also אלהי *Elohay*, "my God." Otherwise we find always the plural suffixes, as אלהיך אלהיו, &c., either when meaning thy (or his) god or gods, either applied to the true God, or idols.

Thus much for the form, to which some erroneous interpreters have attached an importance which it does not deserve, especially as there are other words, such as אדון and בעל *lord*, *master*, which are always construed with plural suffixes, though but one person is meant; such as אם אדניו יתן לו אשה "If his lord should give him a wife" (Exod. xxi. 4); or בעליו אין עמו "The owner thereof not being with it" (Ibid. xxii. 13). These phrases clearly prove that the plural construction of a word does not necessarily imply a plurality of persons, and it depends entirely on the use and custom of the language, whether this be the Hebrew, or any other tongue; since examples of the kind can be found in all others, at least those with which I am acquainted. But as in fact the true God is, as said, the One embracing all the powers, we may truly call Him the *Elohim* אלהים, or the Container and Dispenser of all possible springs of action, the Accumulation of all the forces which sustain and give life to all. It is not that there is a plurality in the person, but because there is a multitude in the ideas of power which comprise his attributes.

But far different is it with the special attribute of eternity, which is in itself perfect, so that no accession or diminution can herein be imagined. God could be the most potent, though He lacked any one of the attributes of greatness which we ascribe to Him. But

He could not be the Eternal, if He lacked either past, present, or future existence. But as the first Cause, as the Creator, as the Sustainer of things, and under this word I comprehend whatever of physical or spiritual beings or powers may be existing or possible to exist, He must have this continuity of being, to be what He is. There must not be any one or more than one who could have preceded Him, nor must there be one or more than one who will succeed or survive Him: He is the first and the last, as our creed designates the blessed All-father. If there were two coexisting powers equally great, there could be no concord in the government of the world, unless they existed at the same place, and had an identity of will, or unless the two would be practically one. If there were, however, two powers not so entirely coinciding in the same will, then could there not reign that harmony in universal nature of which all investigation gives us the amplest proof. For from the earliest record of history, and this is all we have to govern our views in this investigation, we have evidence of the same progression of outward nature; and whatever the chronicles of science hand down to us, amounts to the confirmation of the same idea, that there has been no interruption in the regular course of whatever is subject to our observation, and that nothing has been destroyed or added by any extraneous influence which we can discover. Or, in other words, the same eternal Vigilance which created in the beginning, still watches and sustains all,—and this by himself alone, without help or associate. He is comprising within himself all the powers requisite to carry out his plan of government, whilst He exists as such alone, and

needs not, and cannot obtain in aught the help or counsel of any being, since no one of all things is eternal, whereas He existed prior to them all, and will survive them all, in the event of their change or destruction, —the period at which this is to occur being again altogether within his knowledge, as the capacity to change or destroy is also entirely and solely within his means and power.

So then Moses taught us our faith in the words which we have cited, and which mean accordingly, "The Lord Eternal, whom we call our God, the God Israel, is He who alone is the Eternal." If the nations worship Him, they worship the "God of Israel;" and if they worship another, then is there no existence for the same, because he is not eternal, and consequently not God. The oneness is the inseparable idea of the eternity of God, and a multitude in this eternity is inconceivable, and consequently not in existence; and because it is requisite that the God of Israel should be eternal, it also follows that He is one, without an associate, as He is without any beginning or end, which we can fix as the commencement and termination of his existence. Now, few as are the words ה' אלהינו ה' אחד they are justly the watchwords of Israel, and simple as they are they can hardly be rendered by any other terms in any other language, and consequently every attempted translation must be far from attaining to the force and sublimity which are contained in the original. We can feel the ardour of holiness mounting up in our soul, when we contemplate the elevation, the power, and the eternity of God; we can imagine how He is alone enthroned in might, how all proceeds

from Him, the perennial Source of all existence; but words fail to convey our thoughts; our mind wanders when we mean to condense what has sprung up in our spirit, and we humbly close the book of inquiry, we repose on the revelation of himself which God has given us, and we say indeed, "O Thou God who hast created all, Thou art the Eternal! Thou art One, and the sole Eternal." None but the highest inspiration could so have pictured the Divine Majesty, and none but the Lord Eternal himself could have given the embodiment of what and how He is; that as the one, He combines all the power, and that as the other, He is unlimited by time, and not controlled by any associate, and that He therefore requires not any aid to effect his supreme will wherever his omniscient gaze penetrates the uttermost end of things.

You will therefore understand that the name of the national God of the Hebrews has no reference whatever to anything connected with the descendants of Abraham,—nothing peculiar to this or that people, but only as indicating his eternity, and by consequence his unity. We therefore cannot say "our Eternal," or the holy Name united with a possessive pronoun, because we have no claim to Him in that capacity; but by acknowledging Him, and worshipping Him alone, He becomes our God, אלהינו *Elohenu;* and we are by the same means his people, עמו *'Ammo.* But as we said, at the first calling of Moses the people were ignorant of his name, and it required therefore a revelation to teach them how they and the whole world stood related to the Being who was about to redeem them. Now, as no name was assigned to Him which would exclude any nation from

joining his worship, as no people were able to assume the peculiar name of this God as their own peculiar appellation,* as they remained sons of Israel after their election as before: it necessarily follows, that though the Lord Eternal calls us his people, if we obey his commandments, all nations can become equally identified with Him, if they follow the path He has marked out for our course of life. The privilege of Israel consists not in an exemption from any worldly sufferings, but in the possession of a superior system of laws and morals, devised by the Creator himself as the expression of his will to the sons of man. Whoever then glories himself in the Lord, becomes a child of the Lord; and the privilege is one of universal diffusion; and no one is excluded by any insurmountable difficulty, as soon as the message of life is made known to him. It is therefore false, if our opponents assert, that the national God of the Jews is represented by us as one of narrow sentiment, of an exclusive regard for our insignificant tribe, for a people not distinguished for any peculiar noble trait and high endowment. For even admit that our intellect were the lowest of all mankind, it would not affect the question in the least; since our faith is not based upon our inventive faculties, our peculiar excellence, either moral or physical, but upon the greatness of the Lord, who is supreme in heaven and on earth. But it is not true that we are unfitted for the sphere assigned us; we are a peculiar, hardy, enduring race, rushing like a mighty torrent amidst the

* Whereas Buddists, Brahmins, Mahomedans, Christians, derive their name from the supposed founders of their systems.

waves of human population without mingling with it; distinguishable at all ages by the unmistakable landmarks which define every other nation, and, if we regard a pure and unmixed descent, more so than any other people which ever existed. And whether this was a new impression made on our character when we received the law, or whether it was always so: enough, the fact exists, and no one can deny it, as history has stamped an indelible seal on every word which I have just now uttered. But we assert that the Lord is the universal God of all the world, only that we were chosen his instruments, his peculiar servants, or his kingdom of priests, to be devoted, for as long a time as He might deem fitting, to propagate his religion amongst the inhabitants of the world.

The LORD is accordingly the term used throughout the books containing the events of Moses's life, with few exceptions, to signify the One who is pre-eminent in his holy attributes, and who alone claims the worship of Israel; not because He is something to them which He is not to other nations, but because He is that in truth which other divinities are not. He is the God of Israel, and called by their name, and they are called after Him, "the people of the Lord;" not because we were ignorant, or are so now, of his universal rule, but because other nations did not, and do not now receive his word alone as their guide; because they act not as He has written in his law, and because they unite in their prayers ideas which He has not taught, or call on a being or beings other than the Eternal One.—Now all the time that Moses lived, it was his mission to bear testimony, emphatic and uniform, against the vanities of the worship of the gen-

tiles; and he used, therefore, every opportunity to impress the great truth, that "from the LORD is all," upon the people. But in the time of David, our religion had been confirmed, centuries had elapsed, and the code promulgated at Sinai had taken deep root in the heart of the sons of Jacob; and when they spoke of God, surrounded as they were by his blessings in their beautiful land, protected by the government of the laws of Moses, the word "God" carried with it at once an acknowledgment of the sole Supreme. David, therefore, properly says: "May God be gracious unto us and bless us;" it is no doctrine which the Psalmist teaches, but he merely appeals to his heavenly Sovereign to have a favourable regard on his servants, and to bless them with the light of his countenance, with that everlasting, inward, holy, peace which He bestows on those who serve Him. He, for this reason also, properly includes all nations in the praise, which all shall offer up, when His kingdom shall be established, and all the families of the earth shall be judged in equity. But Moses was the teacher in every word which he was told to write; he therefore does not use the word "May GOD bless thee," but "May the LORD bless thee and keep thee," or the ONE who is alone able to grant a blessing, who alone is able to guard and watch over his creatures, with whom there is no mediator, with whom there is no associate, with whom there is not a second to share his glory, who has no successor to whom to transfer his power. And in this late age the appeal is yet made; it is a sequel to the Shemang Yisrael, or rather as the revelation of the last was subsequent to the Priestly Blessing, it is with it an

exposition of the idea embraced in the first precept of the Decalogue, "I am the Lord thy God." It then means that the God who wrought such stupendous deeds, as made the unwilling tyrant let millions of bondmen go free, is the same from whom all blessings proceed, and who is the sole Being who has any substantive power, unchecked by any other to effect his will in all parts of creation.—Yes, the time is long past since the faithful received this blessing from the one who was trusty in all God's house; and empires and creeds have since changed, and have followed each other upon the ruins of former empires and creeds; and still in the Creator himself there is no change; He is yet the only Eternal who existed in the times of the son of Amram; and he, this happy mortal, this great Moses, rescued by Providence from the flood of the Nile, to become a prophet, the mouthpiece of his Master, is yet the teacher of the people for whom he was chosen the messenger. Whatever was true in ethics then is true now, and no addition has since been made to our stock of moral ideas, nor to our knowledge of the ways of the Most High. Just, then, as we were instructed, so must we proceed, and by the same words by which our predecessors craved for themselves the acknowledged aid and assistance of God, must we continue to implore the blessing of the Lord. It is not that we are hostile to the world; for truth opposed to error is no hostility on the part of truth; but well does error always endeavour to stifle the voice of conviction, for fear of its empire falling, should heaven-born sincerity appeal to the hearts. But let us not heed the storm that ever and anon assails us; we are accustomed to the scorn of

the world; and the same merciful Power who has so long sustained us, will farther lead us onward to victory, not by means of the arms of mortal combat, but with the praises of God which are in our mouth, and are that two-edged sword which will not be returned to its scabbard, till it has slain all the offsprings of deceit: when all the earth shall be blessed of the Lord, and all the nations submit to the equitable kingdom of God, when his salvation will be made known to all, and his light will shine on all spirits. Amen.

Sivan 8th. } 5608.
June 9th. }

DISCOURSE XXVI.

THE STATUTES.

O Thou, who art the Lord Supreme, whose kingdom endures from generation to generation! give us wisdom to understand thy ways, and enlighten our mind that we may fully comprehend our relation to Thee, and thereby learn to subdue our heart to be devoted to thy worship. Teach us to distinguish between the apparent and the real; between the seeming good and the highest excellence which results from thy instruction; that we may be enabled to pursue the path of thy law, undismayed by the attractions and cares of life, mindful only of thy ordinances, looking only up unto Thee for approbation, disregarding the scorn and contumely of men who judge only from

the outside of things; whereas Thou probest the soul, and knowest the thought and desires of the heart of man, that they are vain. Yes, let thy law be our guide, thy wisdom the beacon for our wayward course, that we may live to please Thee, and depart hence with the blessed assurance that we have obtained thy grace, which is life everlasting. Amen.

BRETHREN!

It is not simple believing, blind faith, which constitutes the Jewish religion; for we are perfectly at liberty to search and investigate the reasons and foundations of the precepts which we have received; at the same time, however, should we not succeed in our search, it is the part of Israelites, as men of faith, to submit to the teaching of the Lord, and obey to the letter, even where they do not clearly distinguish the motives of the divine Author of our law. It is not very difficult to understand the nature of this double quality of our religion,—its being founded on reason and on faith; for in the first principle is included the reliance that God has given us power to comprehend in a great measure his ways with man, and in the other we are presented with an incentive to follow the Great Shepherd, whichever direction He may be pleased to lead us, without our questioning Him wherefore He has chosen the road on which we are bidden to walk. In our articles of belief, therefore, there is nothing contrary to the simplest dictates of human reason: whilst in the details of the commandments there are, besides the precepts which owe their origin to historical events, and others which are clearly referable to what intelligent men will readily

acquiesce in, some which no human reason would have evolved, and for the fulfilment of which we cannot adduce any arguments founded on what our ratiocination might produce. In brief, they spring from the Divine Mind as trials of our obedience, and to prove whether indeed we love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul. With these views premised, let us take for our to-day's consideration the words which we find in the second verse of the nineteenth chapter of Numbers:

זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה אשר אין בה מום אשר לא עלה עליה על: במ' יט' ב':

"This is the statute of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak to the children of Israel that they take unto thee a red faultless cow, on which there is no blemish, on which no yoke hath come." Numb. xix. 2.

It is not requisite to transcribe the whole precept, as you can refer to it by inspecting your Bible, out of which it is to be hoped it is your custom every Sabbath and festival to read the whole section of the day, together with the prophetic lessons, either before or after hearing the same read to you authoritatively in the house of God; for thus only can you become familiar with your religion, by imbibing gradually, and therefore imperceptibly, the words on which it is founded. At a future day your special attention will, God willing, be called to the benefit of stated Scripture reading; but at present it is only incidentally that I alluded to it. So it is to be supposed that you have read before this, or will read hereafter the con-

text of our text; wherefore it is necessary only to refer to it as though we had now recited it altogether. You will then see how minute the directions are which are given concerning the preparation of this unique sacrifice, as it was not offered, like all the others, to be burnt on the altar, or to be eaten by the people or priests, nor was its blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar; but it was slain outside of the camp, or afterwards outside of the city of Jerusalem, its blood was sprinkled on the ground in the direction, however, of the front side of the sanctuary, and afterwards the entire carcass was burnt with the addition, thrown into the burning mass, of a piece of cedar-wood, some hyssop, and a scarlet thread. If the other part of the sacrificial scheme is in a great measure a mystery to us, since we may assume, without impugning the wisdom of God, that He could always, as He does now, forgive sin without the intervention of sacrifices: this one in particular baffles all our research to assign any rational cause for its institution, contrary as are its especial ordinances to those referring to the others; inasmuch as it is a sacrifice, without entering the temple precincts; the priest ordained to prepare it, is the second in rank of his brothers; and then whoever handles it or its ashes is defiled till evening, whilst it is instituted, and the ashes thereof are used, to cleanse the unclean who has come near the dead, so that he may again enter the holy courts of God, which act would in his state of defilement call down upon him the punishment denounced against him who profanes the sanctuary of the Lord. It is, therefore, properly termed a "statute of the law," or an enactment which is

not deducible from human reason, nor resolvable by our usual rules of computing cause and effect. At the same time it must be evident that this, with some other precepts which the law contains, can be easily explained allegorically; for instance, we might assume that it is a type of our human nature, impure in its unbridled tendencies, and holy when governed by the will of God; whoever yields himself to the government of his passions without reflecting on the consequences of his doings will be defiled thereby; he renders himself unfit for the perfect entrance into the sanctuary of God, until he have, so to say, waited in anxiety and sorrow till troubles have improved his heart, when, as it were, he is restored to favour as one renders himself clean by washing his soiled garments. So also becomes the human heart a purified receptacle of holy thoughts when it has invested itself with the attributes of obedience and resignation to divine decrees; or, it is pure or impure according as its promptings are good or evil, just as the red cow was defiling or cleansing according to the various circumstances and phases in which the same was found, and all this by the decree of God, which alone is of right the arbiter of what is good and evil in our life. But although we might carry this allegorical exposition out with ease, and add perhaps some few historical illustrations to complete the picture, we have nevertheless no reason whatever to suppose that any such motives entered the Divine Mind in giving this and other ordinances of his religion. Where no reason is assigned, it would be vain to assume any particular ground as a basis, and thus injure and mar the beauty of religion by making things types of any

circumstance or event, with which they have no connexion by direct allusion and necessary deduction.

If it were indeed that Moses was merely sent to foreshadow things to occur hereafter, and that his mission was not a reality, but a mere image of future events: then might we proceed in hunting up for spiritualizing and allegorical expositions, and, suiting the text to posterior events, say that this is the type of that particular thing which occurred so many centuries thereafter, although the Bible does not say so itself. But how does the case stand? What was the mission of Moses? was it to establish an evanescent legislation, or to promulgate half-developed doctrines? Whoever would dare to maintain such a proposition, would to a certainty betray a very imperfect knowledge both of the words and spirit of Scripture. Examine the Pentateuch: and what does it profess to be? Simply an exposition of a few fundamental doctrines which are to lie as the foundation of religious and social practices, and a multitude of observances which are to govern society and individuals, and then again to be supporters of those doctrines on which they are founded. Doctrine and duty are like the stones of a mighty arch which support one the other, and which by themselves individually are nothing but disjointed, and therefore useless masses.

Whatever the ultimate design of the Deity may be, and which is not for us to inquire into farther than his revelation will permit us to go, since we have received no other light: this much is certain, that Moses was deputed to teach doctrines which are true, and precepts which are just. It is not to be supposed now, that one truth can be the foreshadowing of an-

other dissimilar truth, or that one precept which is just can be the type of another which is to repeal this one. It would be indeed wonderful that two things not alike can each be true, or that one of them should at this period be invested with all the characteristics of certainty, and cease to be thus at a future day, yielding its force and convictive power to something radically differing from itself, and which was not known at the time when it first became established as a truth. The same holds good with duties. Assume that it is consonant with divine Reason or the divine Will to establish a certain code of laws, and without starting from this point we cannot believe in a revelation: then it is also certain that such a code of laws must be good and true; since nothing evil and false can proceed from God. If now the Mosaic law was both true and good at its first institution, it is utterly impossible that it could have been designed as a type of a future new legislation differing from it in any one particular, especially if no direct reference can be found in the law itself to such a new and altered state of things. It therefore follows that, to invest our law with nothing but a typical force, and to place the statutes on a basis of shadows and images of what was to be, is certainly not carrying out the design which is evident throughout the Pentateuch and the writings of the prophets, even if our reason could admit such a procedure, which it does not. In all the law we are told that the ordinances should be statutes for everlasting; consequently they must be constantly of binding force, under all circumstances where their execution becomes practicable; and this must be for all those who were included

among the persons to whom the legislation applied. The law was, as we know, given to the Israelites alone, for the time being; it was instituted for all *their* generations; consequently, if there is any truth at all in it, it must apply to all who belong to these generations, without any limit of time, unless this limit be indicated in the law itself. Different, however, is it with those who were not included in the legislation; to these a portion only of the law may be justly applicable; and this can be maintained without in the least absolving the others from any part, even the minutest of their obligations. All this does not confer on the part not applicable to those first excluded any typical nature; since it cannot be applied to any thing other than itself, as nothing beyond itself has any necessary connexion with it.

But there was an evident design in establishing the law, which we can detect without any great search, and this is the imprinting of everlasting truths on the minds of the people. Nor need any one imagine that it is unworthy of the greatness of God to use external means to have an inward effect. We are children of the earth, material beings, flesh and blood, although we have a spirit also by means of which we think and feel. Mere doctrines divested of outward acts would speedily fall into oblivion; tradition might uphold them for a time; but if they are assailed by contrary opinions, and assume that these are professed by the vast majority, they must necessarily yield, not having any tangible point in life on which they can lean for support. This is human weakness perhaps; granted; but we have to deal with frailties, faults and passions in this life; it

is our organization, and right or wrong it exists, and we cannot elevate ourselves above the sphere in which we are placed. The boldest skeptic therefore, how much soever he may exclaim against the defects of the human heart which he discovers, and, by which he justifies his rebellion against the Author of our being, must therefore confess, that man requires matter or material things in which to labour and to exert himself. The spirit itself is enlightened through means of material things; the eye must perceive outward objects; the ear must drink in outward sounds; and any other means of obtaining information, or spiritual progression, is supernatural, a gift not avouched to any one save the prophets and messengers of God. We may then assume that our religion was also intended to act as a negative to heathen doctrines, or those ideas which are contrary to revealed truths; and at the same time the acts were so arranged as to be a constantly recurring remembrance of the doctrines which we had received. It was not accordingly to be expected that all our deeds were to be such, as man might have invented upon reasonable grounds, or in fact such as we could defend upon experience of every-day life. Were it so, it would argue that we could completely enter into the counsel of God, or what is the same, place our own reason upon an equality with the Divine Mind, an absurdity which is apparent upon its being stated. But we may farther assume, that the more startling acts and ceremonies we had to observe, the stronger was our mind drawn to think and to dwell on the doctrines which we were appointed to guard, and for which purpose alone we had been instituted a people. Only look upon the

spectacle which we now present to the world. Remove however the Sabbath; the abstaining from forbidden food; the restriction on a connubial connexion with other people, and similar laws: and it need not be proved that we must long since have been obliterated from the face of the earth, and a distinctive son of Israel would not have been found in existence, from the very period when these peculiar features in his life ceased to be witnessed. But if it was needed for a wise purpose to announce the great truths of religion through means of a peculiar race, not otherwise so except through its peculiar laws, it necessarily follows, that till there be no farther use for this people to promulgate the doctrines of which they are the bearers, they must necessarily be upheld by the same principles through which they were instituted a people, a nation amidst the other families of the earth.

Now our religion presents precisely such features, as contradistinguished it formerly from the ancient systems of belief and practice, and it yet marks us separate amidst the masses of modern times. In Egypt we had observed the senseless worship of animals; those creatures which had been assigned to us as food, were elevated by the highly civilized race of the land of the Nile into objects of dread and adoration. And when our fathers, soon after their liberation, forgot their newly-bestowed religion, they speedily turned back to the idols which they had long known, and they bowed themselves to the image of a grass-eating ox. In their transgressing, they defiled themselves on the idol of their ancient masters, and showed themselves unworthy of their precious

privilege which had just been conferred on them. And dearly was the sin, which had been consummated in a measure through the forced complicity of the man who had been chosen as the chief of the priests of God, the first and the head of his line, atoned for. Have we now a solution of the institution of the red cow, slain under the direction of the second priest, defiling by contact all who touch it, whilst its dust purified the highest known degree of uncleanness? Was not also the golden calf burnt in fire and ground into dust by the prophet, to probe therewith the sinning people? Let us analyze. The highest priest had been the means of promoting sin, through the emblem of a calf; a red cow, red being a type of sin, let it be remembered, one free from blemish, never having been subjected to labour, and all over red, was to be carefully selected from all the herds of the land, to be given into the hands of the second priest, in order to render it an object of purification. It was not a sacrifice to propitiate, to atone, or to return thanks; it was an emblem of sin and its defilements, of contrition and its healing power; therefore was it taken out of the camp, beyond the precincts of the sanctuary, though it was itself to be the means of permitting the unclean to come back into the tabernacle of the Lord. The lofty cedar, the type of exaltation, and the lowly hyssop, the emblem of humility, were tied together by another type of sin, the string of scarlet, and, while the cow was reduced to ashes, the priest was to drop them together into the pile; because if one asks for forgiveness, and feels that he has sinned in the presumptuous reliance on his own greatness, he must become contrite and

lowly as the hyssop on the wall, before he can be received into favour. And as the sin of the golden calf was the first of a series of acts of ingratitude, by means of which we drew down upon ourselves the dread punishments which are still visible among us: the sacrifice, historically emblematic of this transgression, was to be used for all our generations as the means of restoring the unclean to the functions of an Israelite, and of rendering him again a fellow-worshipper among the undefiled of his people. And as it is not the man, who is but the instrument, nor the water itself that makes the atonement: so was it ordained that he that sprinkled and he that touched the water of purification should both be unclean for the day; though by the sprinkling itself the unclean was made clean, just as sin can be forgiven only by the power of God, who himself wills to forgive, and who sanctifies the unworthy and humble means which we employ in his service, though in themselves they are so utterly inadequate if measured against his greatness and sanctity. According to this view the waters of purification were an energetic testimony against the deep-rooted love for the idols of Egypt, and in consequence also against all systems of false worship; and the precept was given to cause us to regard as unsound and untrue every doctrine which tends to ascribe, in the first place, any special power to any particular object in all creation, though it be adored by many and enlightened men; for was it not the abominable emblem of the Egyptian mythology which thus was burnt among us? and secondly, that man must not presume to rely on his own merits for justification, nor to prescribe to himself how he will worship in

aught which is not consonant with the revelation of God; since we see that the same thing both purifies and defiles, just as it pleases the Lord to ordain; wherefore worship the invention of man is not acceptable, while the humblest offering commanded by God will secure us his favour.

It hence follows that virtue and vice, piety and wickedness, are not regulated by what mortals may think these words do convey, but by the sense in which they have been taught us in our belief. If then it is a claim in other religions that they operate on the mind by faith, or a blind acquiescence in not-understood dogmas, thus purifying the heart and rendering it subject unconditionally to the will of God: our system requires an equal exercise of whatever is practically virtuous, although no articles of creed are demanded of us in which our reason is blindly surrendered to the arbitrary interpretations of men on doctrinal points; inasmuch as our religion daily and hourly furnishes us with practical works of piety, in which we can be active with a submissive and meek spirit, relying on the truth and mercy of Him who ordained them that He would not teach us aught that is not true, nor enjoin any thing which is not beneficial in its tendencies. There is a pleasing exhibition of filial piety when a child obeys all the instruction of its parent, because it loves him, and does not each time require a plain and palpable reason for the same before it resolves to act; and this holds good likewise in our intercourse, if we may so term it, between ourselves and the great Father of mankind, when we are willing to obey and to fulfil his commandments from the simple motive that they are his

instructions, and not merely that our reason has been satisfied about their absolute necessity to us or the world at large. On one thing we can always rely, if the motive of any commandment is ever so unknown to us: and it is, that the more we are active in observing religious duties, the more purified will our feelings become; the more readily will we have an absolute command of our passions, and be able to conquer them whenever any opportunity to sin may present itself, which a mere acquiescence in incomprehensible dogmas never can effect. No one can demonstrate to us, either by theory or example, that a man was ever rendered better by believing in the most beautiful theory that ever was invented. One may dream away all his life, yet not be a whit the better for all the most exalted contemplations which he may have indulged in without ceasing; but it is equally impossible for one to be constantly engaged in checking his natural love for indulgence, and measuring his conduct by a strict and determined rule of action without becoming a wiser and a better man. We will not seek for any arguments or examples to prove the first proposition; but for the second, as it concerns ourselves especially, we may appeal to the events of our history for justification of every word which I have advanced. Many nations on being oppressed or transplanted to other climates have sunk into apathy or been transformed into savages or barbarians, and this even among those who were never driven away from their country, but in which they had been rendered subjects to foreign or domestic misrule. But look for one moment only on the picture which we present to the admiring gaze of man-

kind! Behold us torn from our land; cast into dungeons; thrown into the arena to battle with wild beasts, more merciful even in their wrath than our cruel oppressors, for whose amusement we were to shed our blood; sold as captives, to delve in fields and to labour in the forest; again driven out in nakedness and hunger, to be exposed to the pelting of the winter's storm or the melting rays of a summer's sun; or exposed to the scorn of the proud and the derision of the vengeful, who hated us because they could not compel us by all their tortures to bend the knee or to swear fealty to their false idols, the inventions of fallible men; and then reflect how we are wanderers even now amidst the burning sands of Africa and the ices of Siberia; how from the Ganges to the shores of the Pacific men of the wandering tribe and of the weary foot are met with: and yet are we savages? are we barbarians? are we the outcasts of man? are we the stultified followers of vanity and falsehood? have we yielded to the blast that prostrated more powerful and numerous nations than ourselves? Let the facts speak for themselves; wherever mind clashes with mind, wherever the war of opinion is waged, wherever intellect strikes out bright sparks from the solid foundations of reason, there you will find the Jew, if not among the first who lead, at least felt among those on whose opinion the opinion of others is founded. And whence is this all derived? Simply and solely from the force of the precepts which we have received, which have embraced in them high thoughts, imperishable principles united to acts which are constantly recurring, and which accompany the Jew from the cradle to the

grave. In his earliest age he is stamped with the seal of the covenant as a child of the Lord, and he sinks into the embrace of his long sleep of death with the avowal of the unity of God hovering on his lips. It is this which has preserved us, it is this which now upholds us. Let us love therefore the law which is so sure, so beautiful, and let us adhere to the statutes which are ours, relying on God that He will enlighten and guide us truly, to bless us here and hereafter. Amen.

Tamuz 6th. } 5608.
July 7th. }

DISCOURSE XXVII.

THE PAST AND FUTURE.

O God, who comfortest the mourners, and assuagest the grief of the afflicted! have pity on thy sanctuary which is wasted, on thy holy city which is desolate, and on thy land which is solitary, and on thy people which is scattered in all the earth; so that we may rejoice in the establishment of thy kingdom, and in the reassembling of the outcasts, and the rebuilding of the seat of thy glory: when incense shall again burn on thy altars, and the streets of the joyful city be filled with the worshippers hastening from the ends of the earth to bow themselves down before the residence of thy holy Name; whence light and truth are to shine to all the sons of man, who then will know of no Shepherd but Thee, the Guardian of Israel,

and when all will ask as one man for thy blessing, and long for thy salvation; inasmuch as Thou art the God in heaven above and the earth beneath, there is none else. Amen.

BRETHREN!

At this season of the year, which has been devoted from the very commencement of our dispersion until now to the commemoration of what we suffered when our sins appealed against us,—when our backsliding demanded almost our extermination—when it was merely the undeserved mercy of God which permitted a small remnant to escape the pestilence, and the famine, and the sword, which slew our multitudes,—at this season of our annual commemoration it is surely fitting to us, as thinking men, to dwell on the past and the future, and to indulge in reflection, be it ever so little, on what we have been and what we may become again. It is illy in accordance with the qualities of rational worshippers to let season after season pass by, and to observe the fasts and ceremonies by rote merely, without permitting them to have any farther influence on our character; for if this were all that is needed, it is evident from the character and writings of the prophets that they would not have sanctioned burdens in addition to the law on the people. But we know that the fasts were so sanctioned, and that the great council of our nation confirmed them at a later period, and the people always acquiesced in them, even when they were kindly treated, and they kept alive the commemoration of Jerusalem at the height of earthly prosperity. It is therefore evident that to us also, who live now free

from the fear of tyranny, and in the equality under the law which this country enjoys, there must be something significant in the season of mourning for the fall of our ancient state. Let it then be our study to trace some of the causes which should influence us to weep for Jerusalem when our joy is the highest, nor to forget our ancient city when all around us smiles with pleasure and prosperity.

My country! O, my country! is the exclamation of the patriot when, exiled from his native land, he recalls on distant shores the paternal roof which he may not hope to see again, because of the tyrant that forbids his return. He dwells with a melancholy pleasure on the hills of its cherished neighbourhood, where as a child he used to play with the companions of his early years. He recalls his innocent sports, his search for the wild berries and fruit of the pleasant valleys which surrounded his father's cottage, and lives over again in the rapid flight of the imagination the years which have elapsed from his cradled infancy to his now unhappy manhood; and though the stranger's land be more fruitful than his,—though he now quaffs in the fragrance which scents the gale, odours unknown to his rugged clime: he will disdain all the allurements of nature and art, and sigh to behold once more the rugged fields and the barren land which he loves because there he drew his first breath —because there repose the bones of his cherished parents, and there are hidden the ashes of one who had vowed to travel with him the varied road of life.

Have we not as a nation also some recollections which carry us back to Palestine, and for which no compensation obtained in other lands can repay us?

What were we in our ancient land, even when suffering at times the visitation due to our sins? We were under the worst circumstances a united people, having one country, one law, one destiny. When the teachers of righteousness arose among us, they addressed not merely a small isolated congregation, where the voice of admonition is rendered fruitless by the surrounding evil influences, which stifle now among us all appeals to amendment; but they called on a whole people, on an entire race of believers, and they poured forth such strains of eloquence as only such a pulpit as the entrance to the temple could elicit; and they spoke in such terms of entreaty as only they could employ, whose whole soul was bound up in the welfare of their nation. And in good truth, it is not to be supposed that, though they failed in arresting the degeneracy of their age, they laboured entirely without effect; for they did oppose, and with success, the entire overthrow of the great fabric of the law; they stemmed the overwhelming tide of gentile corruption which had seized on the men of Judah and the daughters of Zion; and to them we owe it that we were not lost in the whirlpool of heathenish profligacy, and that there are left those whose mouth swear fealty to the Lord, and in whose hearts his law is inly implanted to the moment of their death. It was owing to their teaching that we had the myriads of saints who prized nothing but the Creator and his law; who loved Him with the ardent devotion of faithful children; who saw nothing in all the earth but a preparation for a better life; and who hence were enabled to resign all, life itself included, the moment they believed that the sacrifice was demanded by the service of their

Maker, whom they were ready to follow through the gates of death into a glorious eternity, so his word bid them advance on that road so beset with terror to common mortals.—And O! when we lived in our own land, and obeyed our own laws, the villages three times every year poured forth all their male population, and troop followed on troop to hie themselves to the mountains of our Lord, to worship the Father of all in the place chosen as his residence. There came the age-bowed man of a hundred years, leaning on his staff because of the multitude of his days, and by his side walked gaily the grandchild of the fourth generation; the one once more to see the sanctuary of his God before his departure hence, the other to be there for the first time amidst the faithful multitude; and there came the shepherd who had left his flock in the desert; and the merchant from the seashore, and the farmer from the plains of Jezreël, and the labourer from his work-bench, all eager to testify their reverence for the portion which they had received from the almighty Disposer of events, and none was afraid because behind him were left his wealth and those dear to his heart, without his arm to protect, without his vigilance to watch over them; in the full confidence that He, who had ordained for them to seek his courts, would not fail in his promise, and not permit the sword to pass through the land, nor suffer the wild beasts to injure the unprotected, and to let the rain be given in its due season only, not to come to destroy and to sweep away the labours of those who looked up to Him as their Sovereign, their Lord, their God.—And if there was a contest between neighbour and neighbour, any unkindness

of feeling, any estrangement between brother and brother, where better than at the foot of the altar could peace be restored? Who more fittingly than the priests of God could interpose to arrest enmity and restrain the angry strife?—And between Israelite and Israelite there was no distinction: we knew nothing of a nobility, nothing of privileged classes; all were servants alike to the Most High, all were equals one to the other. Labour was the lot of all, as all were the sons of mortality; but no one was degraded by the handicraft he pursued; and an exaltation to the offices, which the people were empowered to bestow, did not render any one more than any of his brothers, and he was bound by the same laws and regulations which were instituted for the government of the whole state, and there was no immunity for crime which the highest even might have committed. From the sanctuary, therefore, at the very season of the festivals, proceeded then the stream of justice to all the land; and there, when all Israel appeared to worship the Lord, were felt the benefits which result from equitable laws administered for the benefit of all, by those who owed their elevation to their brother Israelites, and with them feared the great Head of their common country.

In such a state of things no one needed to dread the arm of power, because of the religion he professed; no one needed to plead any excuse for the profession of faith in the One God; because this very belief was the foundation of his personal security, and under it were contrived the laws which governed the land. And whilst our fathers hearkened to the instruction of the Lord, they were blessed with peace and free-

dom, with civil liberty and domestic tranquillity,—to borrow the words of Scripture: "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating, drinking, and rejoicing." "And Judah and Israel dwelt securely, each under his own vine and under his fig-tree." Such a state might have endured up to our own days; we might have expanded to the east, to the west, to the north, and to the south, covering the face of the land with a united, happy, God-fearing race, distinguished for refinement, integrity, knowledge, and the pursuit of peace. Our silent example would have crushed tyranny and misrule, and we would have chased away the worship of idols, and banished superstition and false belief from all the places whither our fame would have reached. But we would be wise above the law; we would be more intelligent and more free than the religion of Heaven permitted us; we set up our judgment above the wisdom of our Creator; we sought license, exemption from restraint; and as we saw the nations of the earth act, so did we endeavour to do likewise. Therefore it occurred, that moral corruption took possession of our commonwealth; our rulers did not govern in the fear of the Lord; falsehood and vanity usurped the places of truth and virtue; and with the increase of personal licentiousness and irreligion, the more we became like the nations in our morals and thoughts: the more had we to lament the decrease of enlightenment and personal freedom; so that at first we were ruled by domestic tyrants, who filled the streets of Jerusalem with blood and carnage, and then we fell an easy prey to foreign invaders, and the temple of the Lord, which we prized for its fame, splendour,

and beauty, as a national safeguard, fell in the midst of the crash of our state, and with it vanished our independence, our self-governing power, our isolated position amidst the nations. And from the day that the flames encircled in their fury the dwelling of the great King, the Lord of all the earth, what unspeakable horrors have not passed over our heads! Speak of the sufferings of any people of which history gives us an account—but what are its sorrows compared to ours? What are its trials in comparison with the hard fate of Israel? Have famine, the pestilence, malignant diseases, intestine warfare within, the sword of the foemen without, thinned the ranks of the human family in any age, in any country: we are yet to learn that a parallel to the destruction of human life as witnessed among us, not for one, but for a long series of generations, was ever discovered in the chronicles of another people. But not alone this; for happier were those who died at once, than were those who were reserved for the horrors of persecution, which in a hundred varying forms was applied to us to make us swerve from the Lord. History may well be silent in details of what did befall Israel after their glory sunk; for too deep a stain is affixed to human nature on account of the wanton outrages perpetrated against God's ancient people. Ay, thus they styled us, yea in mockery of our wo; and still they hunted us like a partridge on the mountain, out of mere sport to see the sufferings of the outcasts of Judah. And all this was done out of a false profession of love for our future happiness, as though the Lord had told them, "Go and destroy Israel."

All this our prophets foresaw when they beheld the

ruins of our temple, as the natural consequence of our sins; and that with the disruption of our state there would be an end, for a long time, to our happiness and peace. And hence it was proper and consistent with our dependent state on the bounty of God, to appoint days of commemoration, which should be observed during the whole period in which the visitation is felt, as days of penance before the Lord, who will not forsake his people, nor cast them off in utter abhorrence. The Israelite, by fasting then on the days set apart in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months, and which are intended to call to mind the progress in our downfall, does not say that he is not a good citizen of the state in which he lives, that he is not ready to contribute his all for its welfare; but that he especially regrets that his own people are not now sovereign in their own land; and that his religion suffers, and its followers endure all the hardships of a conquered people. He can freely mingle the character of a citizen, true to his land, and that of an Israelite faithful to his own race: the two do not come in conflict, unless there should be an enactment demanding a violation of his duty to God, when nothing can absolve him from his first allegiance, every consideration compelling him to know no man, and no human mandate, when it concerns that which our Father has taught us. And the saints of the Lord always acted so. In all that concerned the state they were strict followers of all the ordinances which affected the other inhabitants; but when a surrender of Judaism was asked, they would at all times be found among those who surrendered their lives rather than be untrue to the Lord of heaven and earth.

There were men of this kind already in the time before our Bible canon was finally closed,—I speak of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; and after them there were found millions, who embraced death, as an honourable distinction, to die for the faith which their fathers had handed down to them; and though they acquired no great renown on earth, their deeds and sacrifices are recorded there, where no forgetfulness will obliterate their memory.

But some may say that the changes, which have taken place in our political condition, render the observance of the fasts of no farther importance. Still if we take a more extensive view of the question than our merely personal benefit, we shall come to a different conclusion. It is not only the political extinction of our state which we regret, but also the little importance which our religion obtains in the eyes of mankind at large. Under the best circumstances in which we are found, it cannot but be observed that we have a great drawback operating against us, when compared with non-Israelites. There is attached to us a great degree of ill-will from the vast majority of mankind, no matter what may be their religious opinions, political views, or country, for no other reason than that we are not of them, but a people different from all through our religion. Tell them, and prove to them, again and again, that our interest in worldly matters is the same with theirs, exhibit a character ever so pure and philanthropic, prove yourselves as elevated as possible above all mean sectarian feelings and exclusive prejudices: still you will never succeed in disarming the world of their prepossession against us. It is after all the Jew that is before them,

and they love him not as they love others, though the respective persons differ in the widest manner from each other in all speculative opinions. It is perhaps unaccountable that this has been so among Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, and Persians, who were heathens, and among modern Nazarenes, and Mahomedans; but the fact cannot be denied; and I say, do what you may, cringe to the public as much as you will, and change your ideas to appearance as often as you please to gratify the public prejudice: and still your original character will obstinately adhere to you, and you will even as apostates bear the opprobrium which attaches to you as descendants of Jacob. It is indeed a providential dispensation that this repulsion should exist against us; as it is well calculated to draw the scattered remnants in bonds of love to each other, and to make them fly to a mutual protection as soon as a community of descent becomes revealed to otherwise strange and distant individuals; and that Jew has yet to be born, who, let his conduct be what it may, does not feel deep regret when hearing the oppressions to which we are constantly exposed, in all stages of the progress of society. Let me not be told that I overcharge the picture of the evils of our position. Look at the history of the present day, when nations are awakening to their political vassalage: and still you will discover that in every direction, whilst freedom is accorded to us in law, many enormities are practised against us, resulting from the inveterate prejudice to which we are subject. Whether this will ever be changed, it is not within the power of man to determine; but that it exists now, no one can deny. Even take the most

favourable view of the case: still the number of us who enjoy a comparative state of freedom is small indeed, when viewed against the millions who merely breathe by the sufferance of tyrants and despots, and to whom the horrors of a constant dread of persecution are familiar as matters of daily occurrence. Does this prove that we need not weep for the past, or look with hope to the bright future? I speak of the bright future; because to my mind there is no doubt of its coming. It is not a brighter, freer state, by the sufferance of the powers which now divide the earth among them, which I expect; but that very state of glory of which the prophets speak with one voice, with a unanimity and precision which can leave no doubt on the mind of a believer. It is not that we who hope thus do not sympathize with the progress of freedom, that we do not rejoice whenever a single shackle is removed from the chain which binds Israel, and which enslaves the world at large. May it please our Father to extend freedom more and more, till the name of oppression and tyrant be forgotten. But we hope for something especial, notwithstanding; for a spiritual regeneration of the world, through means of the restored Israelites,—the Israelites, no longer scattered in every corner, ruled over by every tongue and people, but united again under one head, overshadowed by the laws which erst Moses received on Sinai. It is for Zion's glory that we pray; it is for the temple rebuilt in splendour that we turn our eyes to God in prayer. We feel that we are destined to a bright end, that future in which our sun will not set, in which our moon will not wane; that period in which the profession of our faith will not subject us

to any loss or suspicion from antagonizing creeds and systems; that era when universal freedom shall spring, not from grants of kings or the tumults of the nations, but from the pure knowledge of the Name of the Lord which shall pervade every breast; when from sincere love, a newly kindled affection for the Most High, each man will cease from injuring his neighbour, and from forging fetters to keep him in subjection; when peace and the covenant of mercy will bind heart to heart, and tears of anguish at a brother's wrong will be shed no more.

But till this end comes, it well behoves us to weep for the glory of Israel which has been dimmed, and for the children of our God who have fallen by the sword. Again I say, you are not the less attached to the state by so doing; but only by duly honouring your faith, by being deeply imbued with your religious obligations, can you be induced to render obedience to the duties which devolve on you as citizens. There is no other appeal, unless it be the threat of physical force, which can otherwise be addressed to you to make you kind to your neighbours of all persuasions, and it is to be hoped that you will have a nobler incentive to do what is demanded from you, and this is a *sense of duty;* and this again is founded only on religious conviction. The glory of Israel never yet militated against the peace of the world. If our religion flourishes, if our state is triumphant, it needs not be at the expense and the tears of others; we hope for a kingdom of peace, for a spread of divine truth, to be accomplished without the agency of the sword, or political tyranny. It is mercy which is to rule; it is blissful peace which is to conquer. We

are to be the pioneers of the regeneration of man; how? will be shown when the fulfilment draws nigh. In the mean time let us cherish the memory of our fallen state; let us love our religion; let us defend with firmness the legacy which we have obtained; let us also love one another, listen with charity to the cry of distress from all men, but especially of our fellow-Israelites; and let our whole conduct be such that it may be a beautiful commentary on the truth of our religion. So shall the word of the prophet be fulfilled, that unrighteousness shall be purged from our midst through the ordeal of fire to which we have been subjected, and then,

ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה : ישע' א' כז':

"Zion will be redeemed through justice, and those who return in her through righteousness." Isaiah i. 27.

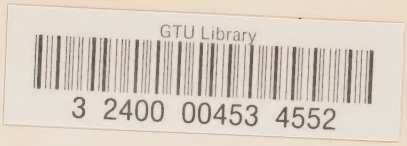
And thus shall he behold the kingdom of the son of David, when we shall no more weep for our sorrows, but rejoice everlastingly at the renewed mercy of the Lord. Amen.

Ab 5th.
Aug. 4th. } 5608.

NOTE.—The doctrine of the restoration, through a lineal descendant from David, the King Messiah, is to my mind the one most important after the cardinal principles based on the belief in God, and the belief in the revelation. The state of mankind is one of warfare; that of Israel one of suffering; and change the ideas as you will, assert what you will, you cannot convince me or any sound reasoning person, that Christianity and civilization, philosophy and progress, have resulted in anything else than leaving the moral world as it was many centuries ago, when the earth was governed by rules less elevated, in the opinion of those who claim everything for modern times. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men," is said to have been the song of

angels when the founder of Christianity first saw the light; but has the fulfilment ever taken place up to this moment? has not every step the new religion has made in its progress over the earth, been marked by blood and violence? did not the sword always force the way for the missionaries of glad tidings? yes, even in the present day? Look at Otahiti, Algiers, China, India, yes, the western prairies of America, and how has Christianity penetrated into them? Was it the olive-branch of peace, or the prancing war-steed, the thundering cannon, the ship of war, the flashing steel? Let history answer, and the assumption must be confounded without farther argument. Still the prophets speak of a reign of peace, under a leader whom God will raise up as his standard-bearer (Isaiah xi. 9, 10); and shall we think that this will not be? Whence do the flatterers of gentile opinions draw their warrant that the Son of David shall not come? Let them wrest Scripture as they please; but unless they totally deny all religion, the truth of all inspiration, the words of the prophet as they stand without note or comment must compel them to be silent, compel them to confess that they have taught falsely in the name of the Lord. There is but one thing true in the world, and that is the word of God; hence all the innovations of modern times, which teach us to look for the fulfilment of the good to Israel in the progress of liberal ideas, are the essence of error and departure from God. It may to some look like *incivism* to hope for a renovation of human society upon a better platform than has yet been witnessed on earth; but irrespective of its being foolish to flatter the present governments by professing an uncalled-for admiration, the very progress of ideas which these men claim as the highest to be expected political good, presupposes a destruction of the present forms of government. But we have suffered so much under every form of rule and exclusion among all nations, that our neighbours must be shocked at our hypocrisy, when we profess to hope for all the prophets promise us through their agency. It is absurd to maintain such notions, and they never can gain us, moreover, the favour of the intelligent gentiles. How much nobler will it be, then, if we all boldly avow our belief as we have received it, and really act so as to challenge the admiration of mankind by our religious and moral demeanour. Our hopes should inspire us with rectitude, and then only can we look forward to the accomplishment of the good which God has foretold for Israel.

END OF VOLUME SEVENTH.



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